

GloMag

GLOWING

*Monthly Online Poetry and Prose
Magazine*

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Edited and Published by Glory Sasikala

Bijay Biswaal

(The self-taught railwayman with an unbridled passion for painting, who has successfully carried his passion to national and international level)



Title of the Cover Pic: Wet Platform, Chennai (**subtitle:** Larger Than Life)

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ARTIST STATEMENT

Artist who respects no limit on creativity...no artistic boundary.

Art cannot be contained in a single format, genre or language. Ever-dynamic flow of creativity flourishes best when let loose, Untamed, Unhindered...Uncharted! From a self-taught man born in a remote corner of idyllic Odisha to a railwayman to one of the inspiring self-taught artists of national and international repute, Biswaal, through his

chequered rendezvous has changed the way a self-taught is looked at by the art world and art lovers in general.

His technical perfection in his trade has left art lovers - Connoisseurs and art critics gasping for more. Water Color, Acrylic, Oil pastel, Collage, Cartoon and Caricature - he has left his own mark in all the genres and mediums. He always maintains that his best is yet to come.

ABOUT GLOMAG

GloMag is the coming together of writers in their diverse manifestations, thoughts, and expressions - and the visual interpretation of these. Sometimes the original thought of the writer gets completely lost in the interpretations. Visual aids help us to decipher the writer's intentions, and at the same time, enhance the reading experience. Perhaps you are sitting in solitude beneath a bough, besides a lake, and you turn the pages. The thoughts capture you, time stands still, and you become engrossed, oblivious to anything but these beautiful verses, expressions, and pictures. Your soul dances in ecstasy, participates in a cosmic experience, it sways and chants. Somewhere someone is telling you about duality, someone tells you about a forlorn house without music, someone shows you how to love, and someone raises questions about existence itself.

And when you come to, the world is still there, the lake is still there, the birds are chirping, shadows have lengthened. Nothing feels the same! You are not the same! You get up reluctantly. It's time to go home.

Glory Sasikala

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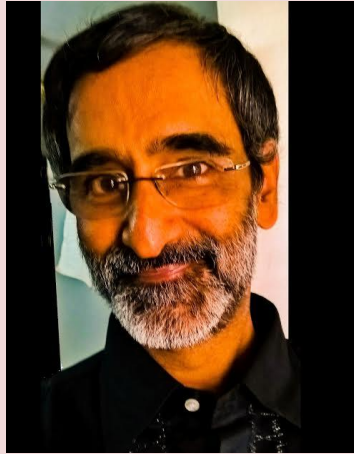
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BACKGROUND MUSIC: 'Heartbeat' from movie 'Kal Ho Na Ho'

PREFACE

Kerala Varma

(For he's a jolly good fellow, spirited, spiritual, and an old monk; mind you, a walking encyclopedia whose memory is legendary, and whose prose and verse vie for recognition) ~ Courtesy Usha Chandrasekharan



When our prima donna Glo conned me into writing this preface, I couldn't believe it because why would she bring down the high standards of prefaces that so far had kept up with the beautiful contributions from the beautiful fellow-members of our group. Because I'm actually a lousy writer who barely manages to avoid spelling mistakes while speaking, if you overlook my atrocious accent. If I were asked to review a film, it would go as awfully as under.

The well-meaning movie "Phir Bhi Dil Hai Hindustani" stars my favourite fruit The Humble Banana in a meaningful role, thereby causing envy in all female actors who are always denied meaningful roles. My favourite scene is the one in which Shah Rukh Khan offers his jacket to Juhi Chawla when it rains. Like any well-behaved girl would do in such trying

circs, she puts her hands in the coat pockets. She screams and takes out a half-eaten banana. SRK thanks her saying, "I've been searching for it for the last two days. You see, whenever I eat a banana, I extend the pleasure by keeping a half for future use" and promptly gulps the two day old half eaten banana, much against the romantic notions a girl like Juhi would have on her first date. You can't script a more touching scene, which also imparts free lessons in conservation and green living. The banana continues to play a strategically important role throughout the movie till the end when the hero, having got the better of the villains, celebrates his engagement to the heroine by taking out a half-eaten banana from his coat pocket and eating it all by himself, without offering a quarter to his aspiring better half, in full view of the appreciative public. I wonder why the banana was not given the Filmfare Award for the Best Actor (Male) in a Supporting Role. Whatever, the actor banana fills the vacuum left in my life by the retirement of my boyhood hero Shammi Kapoor, famous for his relentless neck exercises and credited with having first yelled yahoo aloud before they stole it for the internet.

If I were asked write on Indian mythology, I might make a complete mess of it by saying that those days we had no spacecraft. Ganesha used to fight with Shiva for a contraption that would fly him to space.

"Dad, you say you're god and can work miracles. Except that funny fruit called cashew you made that evening in Urvashi auntie's bar, I've never seen you work any miracles."

"Okay, sonny. Air gets thin up there, so I'll make your nose longer and stronger, which will suck in whatever little air there's like a vacuum pump for you to breathe. That will be a miracle I'll work for you."

"But, dad, that will make me look so weird. No girl would ever date me!"

"Okay, okay. I'll fill your bonny face with silicone and botox to make your face chubby like a baby elephant's. When you're up there in space, there would be no one anyway for company, no girls no boys either. You got to get used to loneliness and endless ethereal travel."

"Yeah, I guess so. I'll take my guitar along for company. I want to be out there, all alone, all over this endless space. What I want to do with my life is to keep travelling with no purpose no destination. I'll be a shoonyaakaasha aataara. Endless travels, endless space, endless music, endless life... wow! Awaara hun, yaa gardish mein hun aasmaan ka taara hun!"

"You're one up on your dad. I'm crazy myself and your mother is the reason I'm tethered to our home. I'll bequeath my wilderness to you. Jao, beta, jee bharke jiyo. You'll have the stars for company."

“But how do I get there? Can’t you make me a sputnik out of thin air like the one Gagarin had?”

“Nope. Just go up your mom’s place Kailas and climb to the top of Sagarmatha and jump up to space. I’ll ask Hanuman to give you lessons in jumping up. Be happy, sing endlessly!”

Now you would ask me about “that funny fruit called cashew you made that evening in Urvashi auntie's bar” because any reference to a bar and Heaven’s Helen Urvashi would normally wake up those who go to sleep while reading my preface.



Cashew Apple - The Genesis

One of those evenings, after his usual quota of five patiala pegs, Shiva challenged Brahma, "Don't go about gassing that you're the best creator in this whole damn universe. I'll show you how I can create better." Then he turned to Parvati who was pouring out his sixth peg, "Tell me, darling, what would you like to have? A cute lil animal to cuddle as your pet or a shady tree to hang your jhoola from or an extra-terrestrial like my favourite bhakta Vittalacharya has been creating?"

Parvati, his ever so doting partner but suspicious of the concoction Ganga must be serving Shiva on those many night stands, said, "Make me a fruit from which I can brew a drink that will keep you away from Ganga's nightcaps."

Shiva worked with passion and created the cashew, a fruit that tasted so raw and so awesome in an unusual symphony of sweetness, bitterness and sourness that everyone hanging out in the Urvashi Bar that evening said, "Wah wah ustad, the wine that'll be brewed out of this heavenly fruit will be better than the best vodka and the best single malt." And everyone went dancing around Shiva, mocking Brahma.

"Wait," thundered Brahma above the noisy din in the bar, "where, my dear Shiva, is the seed of this fruit. If there's no seed in a fruit, it fails the test of creation. The fruit can't breed and all you'll have is a little bit of feni brewed out of whatever is left of just this one cashew apple."

In the midst of the eerie silence that enveloped the bar, with Urvashi anxious behind the counter fearing the worst, Shiva pushed back his luxurious mane and, petting his neck snake that had just raised its hood to kiss his chin in a show of solidarity, walked up to Brahma and said, "Sorry, mate, but it's too good a fruit to be lost forever. Please add a seed, because you're the only creator and the best."

It was a good fruit that Shiva had created and Brahma was looking forward to the feni that would be brewed out of the cashew apple. So he didn't want to mess up the inside of the

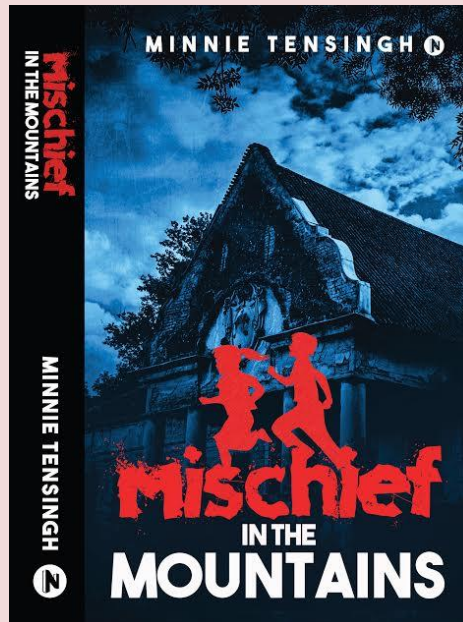
fruit. He added a seed, the best tasting seed ever, hanging precariously from the fruit as if it would fall off any time but would never.

(There is a popular notion in the west that strawberry is the only fruit which has its seed outside. The shy strawberry has stiff competition here from the humble cashew. It'll beat strawberry flat by its sheer arrogance of holding the seed prominently out hanging like a ball putting all those blushing strawberries to shame.)

BOOK OF THE MONTH

Mischief In the Mountains

Minnie Tensingh



AMAZON

<https://www.amazon.com/Mischief-Mountains-Minnie-Tensingh/dp/1946129194>

NOTION PRESS

<https://notionpress.com/read/mischief-in-the-mountains>

(The book can also be bought at amazon.in, paytm, and infibeam)

Mischief In The Mountains is set in the late 1960s in the town of Coonoor. It is about two kids, Ani and Aju and their 'gang', which included the merry madman of Coonoor and a dog; their adventures and escapades which ultimately lands them

in some serious danger. It is a good read for kids in the age group of 8 years to 15 years, and adults who enjoy a witty and cheery read.

Minnie Tensingh

Though I have spent many years in other places in India and abroad, I still consider Coonoor as my hometown. My interest in creative writing developed very early, and I was a regular contributor of short stories, poems and plays to the school and college magazines. I wish to encourage the habit of reading in youngsters, and I have written this book with that in view.

Reviews

Philip Abraham's review on facebook: A delightful book about the escapades of two kids in the lovely little town of Coonoor. While it is meant for children, adults too will enjoy reading the book.

Shiva T.S. on Amazon: An enchanting and hypnotizing tale. I could not set aside the book till I had completed the last page!

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AN HOURGLASS

Counting back footprints on sand,
A castle of cards stand hand in hand;
To and fro the pendulum in my land,
Darkness exists ignorant under the lamp.
Life mirrors on both sides,
Like time arrives to get washed away in tides;
Mind is an analytical entity which abides,
And truth finds few lies to hide.
An hourglass wrote a poem last night,
Soul sang a lullaby to fight the fright;
Clouds took a flight as words in that write,

If blue skies could be classified as wrong and right.
The stopwatch starts a new lap again,
Thirst runs to quench along with the train;
Buried memories in that lane will always remain,
No pain goes in vain even without a gain.

(An excerpt from "Unofficial: The Basic Instinct")



Aakash Sagar Chouhan: He is a Rourkela-based, Odia nomad, restlessly scribbling since 2003. An undergraduate, indeed a college drop-out; but now he is a contributing Author, a blogger, a prose writer, a Poet, an article contributor, Group's Admin of many Pages and Communities. He has been a proud contributor to a few anthologies by International and Indian Poets; books named as "Unleash the undead, Wordplay: A Collection of Diverse Poems From around the World, Feelings International, A Phase Unknown – II, Kamala

Das – Yes I am a Woman and Purple Hues. Apart from pouring his thoughts and himself on virgin papers, during his leisure time, Aakash is an observer, a dreamer, a philosopher. He likes to strum his Guitar and sing. He also likes to play and brush colors on canvases.



UNSTUCK

Of course it happened
this way – the bed was bought,
the sheets were new, and the fist
bore down like a fireball, blazing
comfort into smoke and then extinction.
Of course the memory lasted
decades, even lifetimes, bulging up through
a normal ecstasy, distorting a regular
hope of moving onward, until all passages were
claimed by that disaster and all offspring were lined
with its inevitable outcome.

Of course I never took the haunting as a gift or

a train ride through a desert, though I know that a bonfire
is not the same as that bomb, and my initials have changed
since

that day, as have the ramifications of such violent chaos.

I love beyond the library of other people's stories,

I am not deceived by morsels of paradise promising
a meal or a fridge full of many meals.

Of course it will always hurt and memory remains

a mule on a slow decline, but peace is a whistle

beckoning me into its spell. The hurricane

has lifted and I watch children gather,

forming a community much stronger

than a one-off home.



Allison Grayhurst: She is a member of the League of Canadian Poets. Three times nominated for Sundress Publications “Best of the Net” 2015, she has over 850 poems published in over 380 international journals. She has twelve published books of poetry, seven collections, nine chapbooks, and a chapbook pending publication. She lives in Toronto with her family. She is a vegan. She also sculpts, working with clay; <http://www.allisongrayhurst.com/>



THE DEAR SERIES, CONTINUED

Dear Typo,

Why are you so hard to find?

Dear Happiness,

You are perfect. Make me dance like nobody's watching.

Yet, you scare me.

Happy But Afraid to Dance With Joy.

Soon after....

Dear Joyous Laughter,

Why did you let me in?

Stressful Tears.

Dear Thunder and Lightning,

Stop trying so hard.

Sky.



Ameeta Agnihotri: First of all, I love to write. Then I love to travel, and write about my travels, including about the food I eat on my blog. Being a Food Critic, I have four food books to my name: The Times Food and Nightlife Guide. My restaurant reviews come out every Friday in the Chennai Times. Yes, life's good. My book is done. It was done five years ago. Am still trying to muster the courage to edit it.

Work: <http://timescity.com/chennai>

Blogs: <http://silentsensation.blogspot.com/>

<http://fascinatingtastes.blogspot.in/>



EMPTY FACES

Every day I see,
Empty faces looking at me,
Scared, tired, lost in thoughts
Searching for paths, connecting the dots
I hear them, their bewildered soliloquies
I see them, like sleepwalkers in necropolis
I feel their solitude, an amaranth decrepitude
Mind lost in parallel world that doesn't exist

Every day I see
Empty faces looking at me,

Asking me questions, telling me lies
Digging the earth, pointing to the sky
Waiting for the unknown, revealing the untold
All they wear is a bruised and naked soul

“Don’t hate yourself” I tell them aloud,
The empty faces are all alone, though in the crowd,
Where bliss is ignorance and silence is the only sound
The burden of their conscience pulling them hard under the
ground,

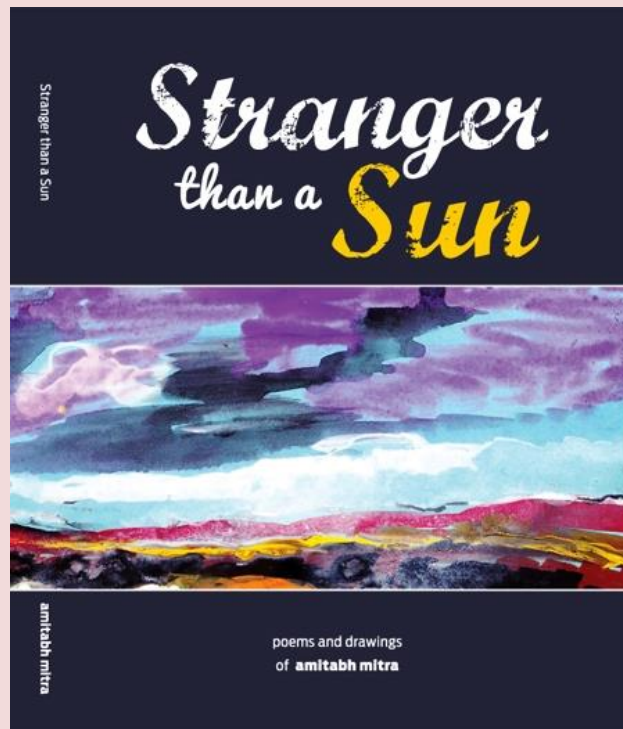
Every day I see
Empty faces looking at me,
Prisoners of the past, torn apart
By the future,
Lost in difference, perpetual hindrance,
The pity is on them, the oblivious creatures
The empty faces are scared of their own reflection
Their exhausted whispers echoing their fiendish confession
The flame of desire have been extinguished for long

But the empty faces still await redemption,
Today I see
Empty faces laughing at me
Giving me signs, undeciphered lines,
That say I too ain't perfect, just like them,
Sharing all the fears, indignations the same
Hurt and restless, I peeped through a glass to see myself
And discovered that it's been too late
For my existence is long lost and am not the same
'Cause I too bear the same scars that defiles my name
Everything I see, I feel drowns in darkness

And realize I've become one of them, one of them....the
empty faces!!



Amit Bitra: Student of MBA, second year, Department of Management Sciences, Pune University (Pumba). He's interested in reading, writing, and music, and plays the guitar.



A semi-autobiographical account in prose poems spanning my life in India, Bhutan, Niger, Zimbabwe and South Africa. Drawings of havelis, palaces and the fort of Gwalior.

EXCERPT

Yet we are forever lonely. We were lonely even when we were together. Your sudden laughter at an afternoon cafe in Connaught Place on that day made people turn and look at us. Your whispered smile said, Aren't we all structures, trying our best to resemble each other. It was then my turn to laugh, spluttering Nescafe on your face. Loving was the ultimate loneliness then struggling to keep up with desperate evenings. And as we shared our nights of gentle violence, gentle killings, an evening took us back repeatedly to where we had never lived. This is the evening I try to share with you today. When the train comes to a screaming halt, these are

evenings we could never correspond. Loneliness takes us over again with an avenging belief.



Amitabh Mitra: He is a Poet/Artist and a Medical Doctor at East London, East Cape, South Africa. He lives in many worlds and narrates his life in hallucinatory stopovers. Words and images tend to amalgamate in many such strange journeys.



If it is so painful to love and to be charged with this electric current, how much more painful must it be to a woman and to be the current, and to inspire love.

(Boris Pasternak)

izquotes.com

LOVE MISLAID

He said, no one ever understood me

Not even you

how much I love you

She said, you will never understand me

Not even when I am dead

I will never be able to prove to you

however hard I try

that I love you

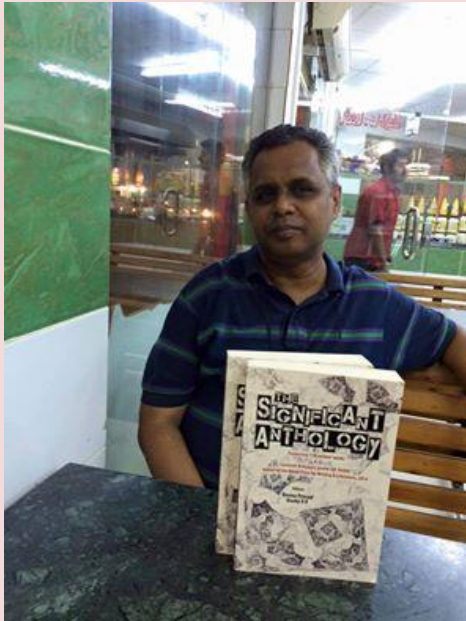
Even there they were almost

saying the same thing

and both speaking true

Understanding not what they were saying

Not saying what they were understanding



Ampat Koshy: He teaches in a college as Assistant Professor in Jazan, Saudi Arabia. He is the author of books like Art of Poetry, Wrighteings: In Media Res, Figs, Allusions to Simplicity (poetry), and co-author of Wake Up India: Essays for Our Times with Dr Bina Biswas and co-editor of The Significant Anthology with Reena Prasad and Michele Baron etc. He also runs The Signifcant League and has instituted the Reuel International Prize for Literature. He is a poet and critic and fiction writer of renown in India and abroad plus a Pushcart Prize Poetry Nominee of 2012. His Ph.D was on Samuel Beckett and his thesis was later published as Samuel Beckett's English Poetry: Transcending the Roots of Resistance in Language. He has also co-edited Inklings and Umbilical Chords.



UTOPIA

Where the environment is unpolluted

Where people are responsible citizens

Where there are no foxy politics

Where there is no greed for money or power

Where the modern satyrs don't exist

Where love wins over wild lust

Where education is not business

Where there is no corporate sleaziness

Where there is no jealous competition

Where there is no poverty

Where there is no religious discrimination

Where there is humanity

Where all are treated equal

Where there is dignity of labor
Where there is honesty
Where there is simplicity
Where the development is not a disguise of destruction
Where there is no bloodshed
Where only peace prevails
Where hatred doesn't exist
Where love is everything that is found
Where there is no cast and creed
And all live as one.
I would want to live there.
Was there such a place, in the past?
Is there such a place, now?
Will there be such a place in future, ever?



Anand Gautam: I am from Hyderabad. I studied life sciences; currently working as a techie, but my heart has always been inclined towards poetry and fiction. I often use simple words to write. I have to snatch some time from my daily life to write and I believe that one's passion must be kept alive to be alive. I occasionally blog at <https://notesandwords.wordpress.com/>



LIFE'S GUARANTEE

Looking for the meaning of life
The philosophical arguments
The rationality and proponents
Of each notion
leaves one perplexed
in search of Life's purpose.

Extensive plans are made
for the next decade or two
All the plans are made
For the dreams we have

The blessing of life
Taken for granted
Like we're assured of
The air we breathe
The life we have.

Suddenly the dark cloak
APPEARS
death knocks
your time shall be no more
In Denial, in shock
The disparate notion
How can this be...?
There is no reason
I am so young
I have so many plans
There's so much more
I wanna accomplish.

Death- no discriminator
To life.
The irrationality confounds
The minds of
both young and old.

The best moments
With special messages
Shared with loved ones.
This precious time
My time left on earth
I choose to do
that which gives me
a sense of being.

I have accepted this finality
I wanna touch your face
In the morning sun
I wanna feel your arms
Holding me closely.
I want to live life fully.

These painful days
I try best to cope
Every muscle contorts
In excruciation.

Knowing the last breath
Will come soon
Till then my love
I breathe for our love
I am thankful for all that
We have, the days and nights
We have spent with each other.
These are the moments
No one can take away.

It's no longer the years
Now it's the months
Sometimes the days
And every morning is blessed

With this joy of life.

Dance with me
for a little while
When I'm gone
The music will play
On in your heart.

When you breathe
That last breath
Will you be satisfied
Knowing you have
Lived this life
The best you could
No regrets.



Angela Chetty: She is a HR Manager, an avid poet and lyricist who lives in Durban, South Africa. Angela imbibes her work with a deep passion and belief that words can touch hearts and change lives. The depths of her soulful prose, cuts across different genres, talking to matters of the heart. Poetry is

music for my soul; like oxygen, the breath of my life. In 2013, an Anthology of Poetry entitled, Heartfelt moments - A Treasure Trove was published. www.heartfeltmomentspoetry.com. In 2015, her poem "Miss Me" was selected as Editor's choice for the Contemporary Poetry Digest and has been chosen as the best poems of 2015 for a Valentine's Special Publication. Angela has been selected as an Elite Poet for 2016. Her poem "Heart and Soul" has been selected as Publisher's choice for the Evergreen Journal of Poetry and has been listed as the Top 100 Poems for 2016. Her poems have also been chosen as semi-finalist for International Poetry Contests.



BROKEN

Don't leave when the sun
Breaks its silence in the heaven
I have given you all my dreams
In the night to play with.....

Each second of my life runs
Like a broken machine, making
Sound of death knell atop
The mound of my small desires....

So don't leave me as a leaf
Tracing its path in the void...
Writing its destiny with

Crackle of dry ink of its mood.....

I promise I will not belong

To you and to no one ever.....

The dawn I have seen on your

Forehead has already been usurped

By the cloud that has stolen my tear....

Don't leave me in the quagmire

Of horrible customs where I

Have to chant my own obsequies

Make my own ripples to reach you.....

Please don't leave me



Anil Kumar Panda: My name is Anil Kumar Panda. Tiku is my pen name. I was born in a small town, Brajrajnagar, in the

state of Odisha, in India. I am currently residing here. I work as a mine surveyor in coal mines. I write short stories and poems whenever I get time.



EIGHTEEN REVISITED

I often wonder
If I can ever be
What I was
At Eighteen

But why
They asked,
Would you
Want to be
What you were
at Eighteen?

Are you sure
You can handle,
The wau gauchines
The loneliness
And the pressure
To be something

Always jumping
Outta your skin
Not knowing
What tomorrow may bring

Maybe not
All of that,
But I certainly
Wouldn't mind
The eternal hope
In the breast
And the joys,
of an innocent kind



Anurag Mathur: He is a trained bean counter, works for a financial services group and has spent almost 2 decades serving that industry. Whatever little time that has been spared from work or sleep or reflective meditation has – with quite a few well-meaning prods and nudges from friends – been devoted to occasionally tapping to the Muse’s dictats from time to time.



AN ODE TO TIME

Time, everyone fears you as a sinister monster that can devour all

Time, everyone adores you as the much famed balm of the mind and soul.

Time, you are portrayed as the lady of love, taking away all pain with a kiss.

Time you are the winged unpredictable angel who leads to the unknown final bliss.

Time, you are the monarch in chariot turning to dust all the pride and tears.

Time you are the old grandma of our childhood showing us the panorama of years.

But be not so proud- oh Time! Oh, you are not such for me, as is famed by folks, other.

For me, rusty hands of Time have stopped in a grayish evening with a receding figure.

The phosphorus dials of you have halted in the stormy night
with the last breath of the Man.

Why? You almighty, pied piper, why can't you heal the scar of
the past, if you miracle can!

The withered leaves of winter passionately are assured of re-
living looking at the tender green.



Avik Kumar Maiti: (email - itzakm@gmail.com) He is a poet and writer from Midnapore. He is a permanent ESL teacher at Belda Gangadhar Academy, West Bengal. He likes to travel, explore the locale with cultures, to drink life to the lees', passion in humanity and drenched in literature. He believes that God is there and one day everything will be fine again. He believes in the flame eternal that is within us, which may cause a miracle with just a sympathetic touch.



THOSE DAYS...

(I)

I have a memory, though faint inside,
A percolation of joy, through barrenness,
A definition beyond my derivation,
That peeks at times through darkness,
Groping for a smile, in search of its conclusion,
That draws, with merciless mercy,
Some thought that hid in my attention.

(II)

I had played, in the shadow of trees,
Scaling the mountains that housed
The wrath of the crone that dwelled beside,
With all those, for whom mountains are molehills,
a game, though nascent in my maturity,

which afforded me the limp that I often fake,
to relive that moment of painful joy.

(III)

A time when the sour mangoes of the trees
that bent into my section of the country,
to talk to the flowers that dressed my courtyard,
tasted in the likeness of ambrosia,
seasoned with the bitterness of the Lahabadi.
Yet a mutual exchange for the smells
With which I could have built a beehive.

(IV)

It was just the other day that I,
clad in armour, unlike people come to taste
the evening scents of Vivekananda Park, was
ready to face the full wrath of Arjun's vengeance
that he wreaked to avenge the four that I robbed
of his ten yards of hard work to reach
the other end of the twenty-two yard kurukshetra.

(V)

I was there yesterday, the heart of a
Bustling, boisterous din, singing in praise
of Durga's spear that pierced through Mahishasur,
head swinging to the lilting music that blew
into the wind that walked into my ears,
evaporating into the moments that I left,
to remember at my leisure.

(VI)

Truth is no truth in solitude.
What color is light without the darkness
to paint the shadows behind the trees?
Such likeness does happiness take,
Giving joy the frown in the shadow of a smile.
I was there yesterday too, a heart, heavy from
the loss that Patti left in my company.

(VII)

Some tears, wetting happiness with grief,
Some, that dry the sadness on my cheeks,
Some, that I purge to rid my mind,

Of silence that speaks aloud.

Some, that I treasure to recall the
moments that I am made of or some that I make,
But all that form the sum of my life.



Avishek Ramaswamy Aiyar: I was born and brought up in pristine Calcutta and lived the first 18 years of my life there before moving to Chennai for my undergraduate education. I eventually moved to the US, where I completed my doctoral studies in Chemical Engineering. I currently work as a scientist at IBM in New York.

Like a lover who caresses you with words soft that flow
In fabrics of chiffon falling from skin that glows.
Are words that tumble from feelings exposed,
To bewitch, hypnotise and playfully cajole -
The pleasures of love in sonorous prose,
The charm of poetry as an emblematic rose.

Mere squiggles etched on paper and dressed in ink
Dance words as graceful ballerines.
Gliding, sliding and tantalizing thought
Composed of strands of elegance from contemplation
explored.



Bilkis Moola: She is an Educator who works as a Head of Department in Languages at a school in Vukuzakhe, a township located in Volksrust, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa. Her first published anthology, *“Wounds and Wings: A Lyrical Salve Through Metaphor”* was received throughout South Africa and launched her poetic persona. It evolved as

an introspective quest for recovery from her personal narrative of an abusive marriage. She presently divides her time between professional responsibilities and postgraduate studies in Education. Her pen continues to sketch the flotsam in her mind from the passion in her heart on shreds of paper that bloom into poems.



REMINISCING MY DEMON LOVER

You are in my life by sheer accident
An onlooker trapped in the frame
As the photograph captured some magnificent ruins
Now in the image, the background fades
You are gaining prominence

I do not know if you remember
We first kissed in a graveyard
Under a tree that shed its seeds
Like drops of blood
You called it the vampire tree
Nourished by the juices of the dead
And the first flower you gave me was stolen

From the garden of a convent
The rose belonged to the virgin and her son
Or the old nuns who died almost daily
One by one they departed
Wreathed in roses
I still have the seeds and the petals

I do not miss you
But there is something in my skin
That yearns for your warmth
And this winter refuses to leave
I am not sure
Those cindery caresses
Kisses that moved from my cheek to throat
Like tears; were they real?
Or fantasies of a moony brain
Were you really there, my demon lover!

Dying, I remember
Was falling off a mountain of snow

To whiteness, whiteness
And to more whiteness
Still, when you call out to me
I dart up to the surface to meet you
From the depths of a dark death



Bini B.S.: She is currently a post-doctoral fellow at Balvant Parekh Centre for General Semantics and Other Human Sciences, Baroda, Gujarat. Her research articles, poems and translations have appeared in national and international Journals and anthologies including *Poetry Chain*, *Kritya*, *Samyukta*, *ETC: A Review of General Semantics*, *JWS: A Journal of Women's Studies*, *DUJES*, *South Asian Ensemble*, *Kavyabharati* , *Korzybski And...* (published by the Institute of General Semantics), *The Virtual Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Routledge), and *General Semantics: A Critical*

Companion. She is the editor of *Anekaant: A Journal of Polysemic Thought* and the Managing Editor of *JCT (Journal of Contemporary Thought)*. Her poems were part of an anthology of corporeal poems titled *A Strange Place Other than Earlobes: Five Poets, Seventy Voices* published by Sampark, Calcutta in 2014. She is the winner of the 2016 J. Talbot Winchell award for the contributions in general semantics, which she received in a ceremony in New York on October 21, 2016.



THAT BLOND GIRL

Our 80s Sarojini

and our Janpath

Nirula's and the first biker for Mithu

Suddenly Benji and Cam

Where

In Janpath

As Paros

In college

In jeans in Bristi's class

As Nsync

And young driver

As older heartbreaker

As the swan who broke it again

In Berlin, as Uma of n

In Ahmedabad in a Mercedes benz

As Jan

Meanwhile Bloom guy

Then Gurgaon as red vest

Red shirt, blue shirt

Saket that last one

Ten years ago as Bristi's red shirt curls

Again GK blue jacket

Now your blue, red, car, yellow

Even shop boy's green hood

Today there is also cherry cake

Thank you hood

And Jon and Red Fort in that light

Between hub and terminal

you in the metro

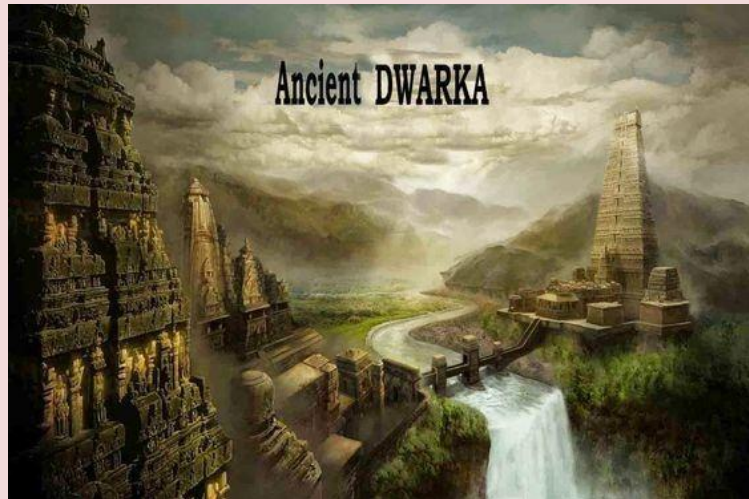
Autowallah your fifty

Amen

(these are vignettes from Delhi and college and my life)



Brishti Manjima Bandyopadhyay: Hi, I am from Delhi and like penning poetry. I am a content writer and editor by profession, a part-time versifier by inclination. Hope you enjoy my poem.



ORAL CULTURE

We belong to the old old very old
oral culture
thousand and thousands of years
we have carried our world orally
some wrote on palm leaves
saints, intellectual
but we commoners
including the Kings
and others
we ruled by words
words as darts
as weapons
tongue the bow

words the arrow
how many how many we killed
just by words
they hanged, committed suicide
you can't blame the word can you
so smart we are
we invented zero
we gave the first word
we divided people
color caste creed
it is then better to rule
rule we have
for others
we all are above that
we punish
will never get punished
art of survival we know
we never write or commit,
we say and if it boomerangs
its natural we deny

deny is also a weapon we used silently,
mark this we do not use weapons we make others use
they fall into our trap
we use words to get things done
to get away
to escape
we rule the world with words.



N.Chandramohan Naidu: He is a retired bank employee, now a freelance writer and photographer based in Chennai, part of the poetry circle which meets first Wednesday of every month. I am writing poems to be subsequently brought out into a collection.



I HATE MY BODY

I hate my body.

Suppression, Oppression, Obesity.

Not a slave to my body,

But a slave to my mind.

Carefree my soul runs,
detached from my body.

My heavenly soul;
my Earthly body.

Pictures, make-up, brushes.

Selfies, check-in, check-out.

My mind goes round about.
Beautiful girls,
beautiful girls everywhere.
Glossy magazines
I cannot compare.
Media, why do you do this to me?

Beautiful soul,
beautiful soul,
why can nobody see you?
Hidden inside mortality
a Body
full of scares and wounds.
You remain untouched
and still Magnificent.

(This poem in no way expresses the author's personal feelings or thoughts)



Chestlyn Draghoender: He is a young South African poet based in Cape Town. His writings have appeared in numerous literary journals, online and print. Chestlyn is passionate about music and literature.



THE MINOTAUR'S LAST CHAT

I did not ask to be a Minotaur,
I did not ask to live this sort of life,
I did not ask to eat Greek virgins raw,
Trapped in this maze – it's a mad sort of life!

Blame my mother; she slept with a bull,
Anything born from that would be messed up,
Being a monster is really quite dull,
Always the same meal without bowl or cup.

They're always running, no chance of a chat,
Always running away then getting lost,

At least the exercise makes me less fat,
I'm really quite fit as they find to their cost.

But tell me about yourself? You look sweet
And sour, Theseus you say? Watch your sword!
You could hurt someone, I'd much rather meet
You on safer terms. Ouch! Watch that sword!



Christopher Villiers: I am freelance writer in the United Kingdom, with a Master's degree in Theology, who writes about God, Love and the Universe, big things in little poems! You can see more of my poetry on my Facebook page.



GLASSES

Night has perched on those lips, as a silver, clipping off a few black wings.

It's that blanket which flies away as a crow
each morning,

It leaves behind a window, which has a glass
Beyond that are few hours, busy, reaching for you.

I will be in a night now, always, even though moons turn yellow.

Your odor will find its way home in my dinner at noon.

It is the white gladiolus, which has just touched the window,
with a glass.

Now, I see a tree at midnight twelve, full of days.
They guarantee you in seasons.

Were you alive before? Are you alive now?

The blanket waits for me, as does a dream.
I will take it for sure.
I will see through a window, without a glass.

Perhaps, then it will answer
why glasses those are transparent, also hide a reflection.

I will either lose you or find you, forever.



Daipayan Nair: Born in the year 1988 in a town named Silchar in Assam, India, he is a freelance writer, author, poet, surrealist and admin of a few active groups on social media platforms. He writes poetry on an array of subjects. His poems have been published in quite a few international as well as national magazines and anthologies. He has also been awarded a few prizes including the recent Reuel International Prize For Poetry 2016. His recently published book containing his collection named 'The Frost', a bouquet of lyrical poems, has gathered positive reviews from many spheres. He has also invented a new poetry form in the field of creative writing called 'The Tideling'.



LOLITA, THE SYRIAN WOMAN

Lolita, the Syrian woman, running away from War

Coming to Europe

Dreaming that as soon as possible

She'll coming back to her mother country

But no

The malicious enemy remains behind

And at in front, the another day

Meeting with a new enemy

In Greece, in Turkey, in Europe

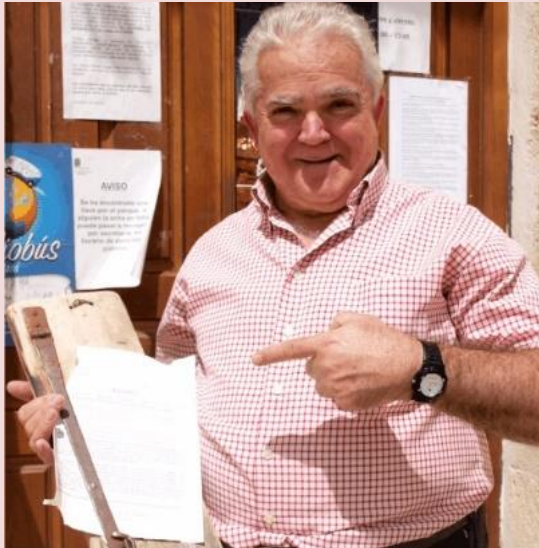
Who, as a postman

Will call to her twice ever

But not will hand in any letter

She sauntering by no Countries

Falling often
To the ground languid and, other times
At full speed
Escaping from that Mr. Pepe “The Put out fats”
Christian or moor
Who want to abduct and rape her
In the moorish place
Or in the Capital’ fair.
I feel the pain of her heart
And the sweat of one’s brow
But what more pains me
Is that there’s not kindness not in churches
And if she is killed
The unique that the lords of war will make
Will be tear up their vestments
And to feel that they have spent
Any cannon balls in vain.



Daniel de Culla (1955): He is a writer, poet, and photographer. He is also a member of the Spanish Writers Association, Earthly Writers International Caucus, Director of the Gallo Tricolor Review, and Robespierre Review. He's moving between North Hollywood, Madrid and Burgos, Spain.



"The use of the atomic bomb, with its indiscriminate killing of women and children, revolts my soul." Herbert Hoover -01August 1874 – 20 October 1964 -31st president of the USA

HIROSHIMA 6 AUGUST 1945-NAGASAKI 9 AUGUST 1945

when the deafening roar of thunder
shatters the stillness of the night
lightning flashes violently
Streaking madly across the sky
and lights up the night
like a thousand neon lights
flashing in unison
and with every thunderous roar
terror strikes the heart

of every creature on this earth

ever wondered where it hurls

its mighty bolts of fire

to what path of destruction

does it lead

did those souls that tilled the soil

that went about their daily chores

the mothers that suckled their babies

to their breast

and sang sweet lullabies

and hushed them to sleep

did they see the thunder hurtling

from the skies

did they stop midway

in whatever they were doing

the surgeon with the scalpel in his hand

the mother gently suckling her child

to her breast

lovers in ecstasy lost in oblivion
to the joys of nirvana
the teacher giving lessons in history
to her attentive young charges

did they have time to think
put the last touches to their task
kiss their children on their cheeks
hold their lovers in an embrace
sing their nursery rhymes
when the thunder and lightning
shook the earth
and the explosion rocked the
ground and ruptured the earth
from deep within its belly
and spat and spewed its guts

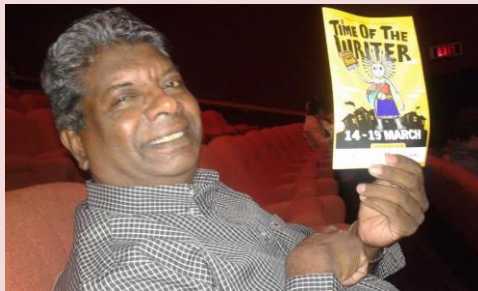
the stench of blood and death
and burning flesh and mournful cries
permeated the wasted barren land

that once was beautiful and serene
now a cloud of dirt and dust
thicker than any mist
the naked eyes had ever seen
rose like a giant mushroom
and obscured the land and the sky

ever wondered if Thor and Indra
fighting for supremacy
over the land and sky
could ever descend to such madness
and send thunder and lightning
to destroy life, precious life
and scorch the earth to oblivion

ever wondered why
Standing on a crest
eyes cast across the vast
New Mexico desert
stricken by his creation

of mass destruction
the god of the atomic bomb
Julius Richard Oppenheimer
bewailed the words of Krishna
as prophesied in the Bhagavad Gita
“Now I am become death,
the destroyer of worlds”



Gonapragasen Naicker Aka Danny: He is an Indian born, and brought up in South Africa. He has been fascinated by, and writing poetry since his early boyhood. He has performed his poetry at various forums, including the Poetry Africa Festival, the Mauritian Writers’ Association, and Gloriotimes, India. He is the Convenor of the Live Poets Society, Durban, South Africa.



EMILY AS WE SORTED OUT THE BONES IN THE GRASS

I tore into the chicken's neck
as Emily floated the idea
that maybe she didn't want
to have a third child, that
we might be too poor
to buy a bigger house,
or to put "all those kids"
through college. I listened
& tried to keep the deep red
on the newspaper I had laid
down on the driveway, not
because I cared about the color
on our broken-up asphalt,
but because I didn't want

to give the foxes from the ravine
a reason to come back
to our house. I let her talk
until I knew the blood was out
of her argument, until the chicken
had been drained as well
& then to her horror I dipped
four fingers in the blood
I had collected, so that I could
drag them under my eyes
& before I told her about
my dreams of having a third
child, I put my hands on her
cheeks to give her the paint she
would need to talk me out of
feeling like I could handle
anything, even her hesitancy.



Darren C. Demaree: He is the author of five poetry collections, most recently “The Nineteen Steps Between Us” (2016, After the Pause Press). He is the Managing Editor of the Best of the Net Anthology and Ovenbird Poetry. He is currently living in Columbus, Ohio with his wife and children.



CONQUEST

Most Earthlings grew up in a certain way as a consequence of the conquest

of much of our planet by various peoples.

Many of us have the greatest respect, and sometimes veneration, for them.

Hundreds of millions think and write mainly in their languages.

We still use chiefly their curricula at many of our schools and universities.

They are the bench mark for many matters.

We still tend to kowtow to many of the rules that they had framed.

They occupy the moral and ethical positions of authority in much of our world.

Most of the books we read are written by descendants of the conquistadors.

Much of the news, films, TV soapies, reviews etc that we imbibe are conceived by writers who have been suffused by exposure to ideas, attitudes and values that hark back to colonial times.

We are taught to be 'global' in perspective and not to divide ourselves from those who had conquered us.

Hundreds of millions are happy to be dominated by them.

Many of us are jubilant if our children learn from the great literature of the conquerors while much of our own literature is rejected.

However, Colonial curricula helps to create caricatures of the conquistadors.

Millions try desperately to look like them, dress like them, talk like them, know what they know, marry them and ape them.

Many of us look down on people who look like us, and are contemptuous of our own in every way.

Some know a great deal of pain because all we want is the impossible: to be them.

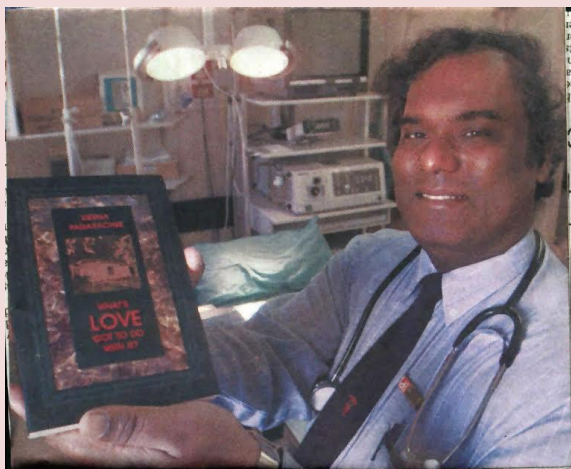
We benefit from much of the science, medicine and industry that they invented and conceived.

We are sometimes ignorant of our own intellectual, scientific, cultural and literary heritage from which they had borrowed.

Much of the philosophy (some of it is to be respected) that we live by emanates from those whose antecedents were,

in essence, invaders, plunderers, rapists, destroyers, arsonists, addictive drug pushers and terrorists,

and, therefore, criminals.



Deena Padayachee: He has been awarded both the Olive Schreiner and the Nadine Gordimer prizes for prose. In 1987 he published a book of poems called A Voice from the Cauldron. His short stories are featured in a few anthologies, including Jonathan Ball's A Century of South African short stories, Penguin's Modern South African short stories,

Reader's Digest's Best South African short stories and the University of Cambridge's New South African short stories. Wasafiri, Crux and Skive have published his poems.



HOUSE OF WAX

And now tiz eve and you are out of sight

Itz me searching for thee in these dry runs

In this withered land I am hurting my feet

And chasing you....

I wept so hard in the room locked,

Tears left my eyes and caressed my cheeks...

Tried to fake a smile but soul dint feel the need ...

Indeed

missing the times favouring us....

Once I was a girl who loved these storms

I felt alive, I loved sparks..

I loved walking on these bare unending land

And Loved when the winds blindly played with my hair...

And then I remember illusions transpire to be shattered..

feeling beheaded, betrayed , sellout, treached.....

And now my feet sore and burnt ,

Little late though I realised house of wax is melted someday...



Devyani Deshmukh: She is pursuing master's degree in computer science at US. I am highly interested in writing. This poem is nothing but a fictional work. It shows the plight of a girl who is broken in love and made to keep distance from him.



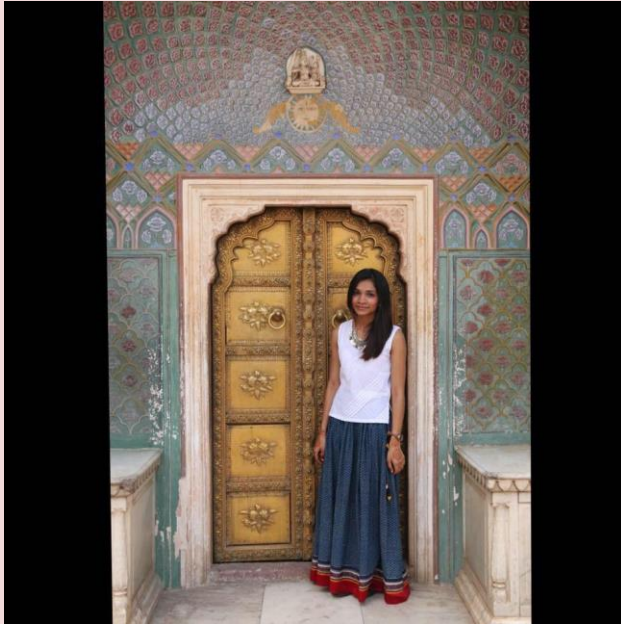
VOID

Walking down the same streets,
Where once I used to be a chirpy bird,
Now, I am just left with nothing,
But a void that could never be filled.

The lanes are the same,
So are the lights,
Just people change,
As time passes by.

Some incidents change us forever,
And some leave a void,
Waiting to filled,
But could never bring back the old times.

As I sit on the pavement,
And look at the people walking by,
Everyone has some void or the other,
Just waiting to filled, Waiting to relive again.



Dikshita Nahar: Sugar, spice and everything nice. That's not who I am. I'm made of caffeine, books and movies. A writer in making. And yes, you could call me Dikshita.



FOREVER

In the autumn twilight
When I kissed your lips
A sweet fragrance rose from the lake
And filled us and everything around
With a joy untold.
Just then you opened your eyes
A tulip fell on your bare navel
A bugle sounded somewhere in the distance
I hastily picked up the flower with my lips
And you moaned in pleasure.
There was no stopping then
We caressed each other fervently

Our bodies played in unison
Discovered all the spots of pleasure
Sucked in all the smells and tasted all the nectars.
Long after we reached our ecstasy
As we remained clung to each other's body
with the sound of bugle still playing in the distance
You said, "I love you forever"
And that was when I died
Reached my heaven under the tulip tree.



Dipankar Sarkar: He is on a continuous journey to discover himself and the mystery called life. He remains an eternal optimist with a never-ending zeal, in spite of the many battles that he has lost and few that he has won.



Nanda Soobben is a widely and internationally acclaimed South African cartoonist from Durban and the only color artist during apartheid. He has received several awards, including the Amnesty International Award at the World Affairs Council in San Francisco, A United States Congressional Award from Speaker, Nancy Pelosi and a Doctorate from the Durban University Of Technology. His works are in the Nelson Mandela Collection, The Killie Campbell Collection, The Luthuli Museum and the Smithsonian. It was the Tom Thumb art competition, which he won when he was nine years old that sparked his desire to explore his creative talent. In 1987 he was made an honorary life member of the Brazilian Academy of Fine Art. The Centre for Fine Art Animation and Design (CFAD) was founded in 1994 by Nanda Soobben, and through this tertiary institution many previously disadvantaged individuals have been equipped with skills to thrive in a high technology art and design work environment.

HAVE YOU HEARD OF CATO MANOR?

We live here – Our roots anchored again on the periphery of Cato Manor

they said our kind dwelled here – The Nqondo clan in 1650 followed by

the Ntuli but we rented from Mr Moody – Worked some land and lived in

a corrugated iron palace grand but old George Cato sold this land to Indian

market gardeners, our new landlord fathers – Who could foresee foretold horrors?

At night the embers predict our future but we do not want to leave here.

Garden Boulevard – Narrow planted strips of fresh fruit also vegetables carefully

tended and groves of sweetly smelling avocado, mango and pawpaw resulted in Durban

city market awe but we never heard the crow's warning caw – Our wealth was locked

in places of worship, founded schools as well as cultural and sporting institutions but we

came alive in a daily spicy jive creating authentic Durban curry, which would make you

run in a hurry – We foolishly agreed to become shack lords but political fat-cats created organic

cultural wars, exposing their human flaws closing neighbourly doors – We never saw the plants

wilting.

Living on the Edge – Brown our mood scraping daily for soul food – Ukudla our daily

nourishment fearing permanent banishment – Tempers flaring dissidents gathering

emotions sweltering – White our prayers for peaceful negotiating – The sun still melts

our empty rusty chairs but no-one really cares we sometimes hear ubaba's raucous laughter

as he consumed his secret recipe umqombothi then shout his incomprehensible banter

only a hot potjie of isobho would calm him down as he told eerie stories at sundown.

Grey Street massacre – Why oh why did Boi steal from that market stall? Yellow our

fears as we heard his punishment – Intoxicated frustrated misguided they reacted

violently – Our tears fell silently our pleas for sweet peace muted by festering anger

exploding, deleting, injuring – The scene too obscene to share in this imploding

cultural couldron scarring their humanity but what about the children?

Ghost Town – It came at dawn not a chance to warn – Regime machines marched over

us that grey morn – Oh how we mourned, our roots once again scorched by the Apartheid

dragon warlords trying to bury old scores – But our eyes remember our tongues still form the

words our feet still dance to the rhythm – Only now they burn in fiery surrender whilst

the elders whisper – We lived here...



Don Beukes: He is a retired teacher of English and Geography now writing poetry. Originally from Cape Town, South Africa, where he was born, raised and educated in the last two decades of Apartheid, he taught in both South Africa and the UK for twenty years and hold EU citizenship. As a person of 'mixed race' heritage, his poetry reflects the racial and cultural battles growing up in a racially divided society and indeed as a global citizen and hopes to adjust our moral compass. He also writes about the socio-political, life and death, womanhood, nature and religion.



"WHY DO YOU FEEL SUPERIOR"

Becoming a bridegroom, why do you feel superior?
For her you become a hero, why do you make her feel inferior?

She may not look attractive all the time, why don't you peep into her interior?

Taking the responsibility, why do you feel superior?
She loves you infinite and makes you a mayor.
Why don't you respect her when she leaves for you the special chair?

Making her a bride, why do you feel superior?
She prays to serve you lifelong, why don't you appreciate her prayer?

She longs to be praised when she dresses her hair.
Paying for her, why do you feel superior?
You stay with your dear ones even after marriage, she makes you dearer

For her you become a hero, why do you make her feel inferior?

She never forgets you when she says her prayer.
Giving her protection, why do you feel superior?
She suffers from the pain that you can't go through, why
don't u make her feel your presence there?

The pain lasts longer if the position is posterior.
She offers you a new life still with a smile then why don't you
make her feel superior?



Zebish Farheen: I am a student of Dr. Shamenaz ma'am who is a meritorious professor and guide. It is due to her guidance that I felt motivated to get my pieces of writing published. I am a simple, affectionate, benevolent and emotional person. I believe in the adage -"Where there is a will, there is a way". So I never give way and make the best endeavour to wipe out the impediments in the way of life so as to access the destination of success.



EVENING

inert desires
happily lounge around
with a drink
your voice playing in the background
eyes half closed
lights gauge the mood
and make themselves scarce
that is how I want to glide
into sleep
no yearning
and no regrets at lack of it



Gauri Dixit: She is a software professional from Pune, India. She is an avid reader and regularly writes in poetry groups on Facebook. Her poems have been published in 3 anthologies. Her poems were featured in the Poet's Corner for the E-zine 'Mind Creative' published from Sydney Australia and Learning and Creativity e magazine. She has also co-edited a mini anthology for TSL and Different Truths for the Refugee Day.



Thought I belonged

To someone, some place,....

Some cruel heart hacked her to death!

Not even sparing her roots.

Summers never ended

Without the summer showers

Unceasing, generous , kind,

Outpourings of ancient dreams

In her company.

She spread her arms to the skies

And as she gently swayed,

We waited, looking up,
Under the green canopy,
For them to drop
Often in multitudes.
And they did.
Every minute.
Sometimes crushing the dry leaves,
Sometimes hitting the earth hard and rolling.
A little orchestra in the air!
A mango rain
Flooding the storeroom floors and shelves
With Grandma in the middle, smiling.

And then,
All of a sudden,
She is not there!

It is an empty ground in the sun!
(Some builder at work, may be)

A brutal murder.

And no one to question.

No.

I don't belong here anymore.



Geeta Varma: She has been a teacher for thirty years and a Freelance journalist. She is now an Educational Consultant and writes for Deccan Herald. She enjoys working with children and has conducted many creative workshops. Her interests include music, reading, writing (poems and stories for children) and travelling. She is married to Shreekumar Varma (Writer and Novelist) and has two sons, Vinayak and Karthik and a daughter-in-law daughter Yamini. She lives in Neelankarai, Chennai.



SAUDADE

There's a pain in my heart that sits like a song unsung,
For the melody got muffled and drowned in a sandy gust of
lonely deserts,
Its lyrics buried like dead leaves in the soggy mud,
And the voice that should've sung it now mute with a choking
that silenced it.

This song will remain unseen in empty skies forever,
And no one will even know it existed ,
Shelved away in dark clouds,
That don't know to rain for the tears are too much to fall,

Inundating the eyes of storms that whirl in its soul,
Its rhythm has died with a heart that cannot beat,
Its tune now a mere stifled sob that a breath swallowed.
The writer of this song a forgotten dusk that bid the earth
goodbye,
To merge with a night sky moonless and without stars..
Its hum a silent tear drop dissipated in a light it cannot t face.
All that is left of this song is the wisp in bare trees that have
seen enough seasons,
Oh saudade of my soul.. your presence is always the absence
that will remain a void.



Geethanjali Dilip: A Chennaiite at heart, she is a graduate from Ethiraj College and a postgraduate in French from Bangalore University. She is passionate about poetry, travel, teaching travel, gardening, interior decoration, and enjoying

a deep spiritual connection with everything. She's been teaching French, freelance, in Salem for the past 34 years in schools and colleges, and at her centre, Zone Francophone, in Salem. Her family includes her husband, Dilip Narsimhan, daughter, Manasa, son-in-law, Ajay, granddaughter, Aarushi, and her parents.



XMAS MESSAGE FROM HOME

Fall is slowly gathering in Gibraltar. Nights gather and golden streams of sunshine tawd-en to tendrils. But it is still warm at halcyon 70 and will only fall to 60 at Xmas before January lightens and brightens up.

Meanwhile in Denmark, a friend of mine, turns up his collar to the cold, falling snow to post a letter on Vesterallée, Aalborg, the northernmost city of Denmark in Northern Jutland. A hard winter has been forecast for Denmark and Arctic storms gather as dusk falls on the long, winter nights. Hoar frost has been glistening on the cars there for a month now.

In England, storms gather and rain-washed streets lie mean in murky Manchester in the old Industrial North, where once water-wheels turned in full-flowing Pennine streams, only to be replaced by steam-power dug out as coal to turn those "dark Satanic mills".

In America, too, Christmas is on its way. Wisconsin in the Rockies gets it hard with wind-chill down to – 20F. New

England bears the brunt of Western Continental winds bringing snow to New York. The prairies turn to a pancake of ice, blizzard-swept. The finger of Florida sticks out into the warm, sun-bathed Caribbean but takes a beating from hurricanes nonetheless that lash the fronds of palm-trees to a frenzy. Only southern California dreams on in the sun.

LA is like here only without the smog. Bright sun girds the shabby houses, warms the narrow streets in the afternoons and shadows the lofty palms while the oranges peep out in ever-sunny Gibraltar. Barbary apes – tail-less monkeys – scamper up the Rock, which was once the last refuge of Neanderthal Man, looking out to Africa at ten miles distance, whence Modern man was on his way Out of Africa to replace him.

I wonder what Christmas is like at the Antipodes in South Africa or Australia? South Africa sees all four seasons in one day, they say, brisk, bright and cold in the morning and sun-braised in the afternoon. Soweto and Mdantsane look on from tin shanties. Australia, too, as surfers surf on Bonzai beach and turkeys get barbecued in backyards in time for a traditional Xmas with Santa Claus in white whiskers and red garb in air-conditioning. Australia meets Christmas at high summer.

But Gibraltar, Denmark, England and the States, Australia and South Africa, Christmas comes to one and all. Rudolf with his nose so bright draws the toy-laden sleigh from the North

Pole to the delight of little children. Grease from turkeys smears broad African lips and the lips of thin-lipped Europeans alike.

Christmas brings "Great tidings of great joy" to shepherds "watching their flocks by night" and to "We three Kings of Orient are". It brings gifts to rich and poor. "For to you, this day, is born, a boy of David's line". He has come to bring Peace to a war-torn and weary World. His Blessing be with You and Yours on Christmas Morn, so where ye be in this World. In Gibraltar or Denmark, in the UK or the US, wherever ye be, "Great tidings of great joy".

published earlier in Fullosia Press



Geoffrey Jackson: He has been an intrepid TESOL instructor at 5 universities and 4 colleges, blown off course from England to Holland, Finland, Hungary, Oman, Saudi Arabia and, in the Roaring Forties, to Denmark. A self-described European cosmotrollop and Americanophile with New World dreams, Geoff is the Poetry Editor for Fullosia Press.



she fed me stories
along with the food
i tasted the feel of her fingers
the love in them
the wholesomeness of the food
she held
the anxiety in her eyes
as she fed
waiting for my approval
why was my well-being so important to her?
why did she need to know that i ate well?
Amma, my rice
is now salted with tears
as i raise food to my mouth
i pretend my hands are yours

i try to recall a story you told me
and i sleep holding a sari you wore
all that remains
of you and your love.



Glory Sasikala: She is a poet and writer, currently residing in Chennai. She is the editor and publisher of GloMag.

<https://www.instamojo.com/Glory/>



PEACE OF MIND!

White serene blissful peace

Seems everywhere

Soothing winds and aura

In its natural form

Chiselling meadows across verdants

Petals bowing themselves down

Welcoming the comely beauty

Coming from the azure sky

To tie a knot with the Earth

Her bellies being made of ice

Shimmer of having a sunkiss

Dews sprinkle their essence
This season and this weather
Is like the union of two souls
Peaceful mind and calm soul
Brewing their exuberant milieu
To taste the chips of fascination
And, ameliorate the whole passion!



Jayant Singhal: A voracious reader and an enraptured author, Jayant Singhal, under the animated pseudonym of 'Saaransh'. He began nurturing the passion for expressing the enchanted aura of the world through his pen just a few months ago. Having a strong affinity for English language, he

loves to feel the imbuing effect of it. He is currently writing a Facebook page, "Aroma - The Essence of Life". Dazzling through the twists and turns of this beautiful voyage, commonly known as 'Life', he is en route to the bewitching nature of happiness and peace.



CELESTIAL SONGS

A Prussian blue sky,
willow weeps golden threads,
silver snow drifts on brown earth.

Hallow mouth of the moon.

Clouds cross forming
an airy handkerchief.

In our frail world, even
meteors, the eyes of heaven
fall like dust from God's hands.

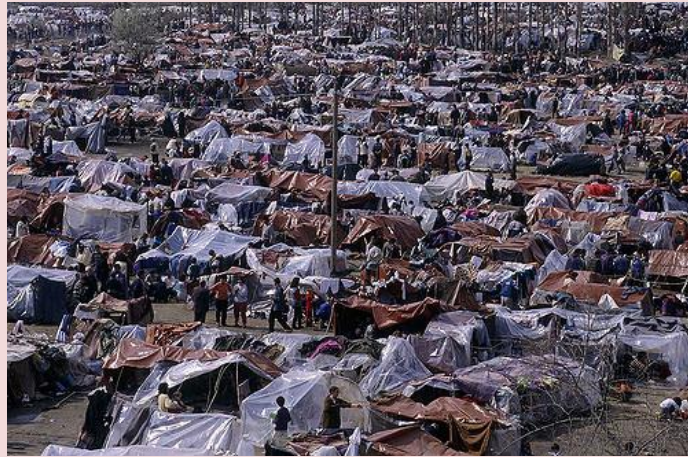
Today's work is done.

The sun fell from the sky

for a bowl of stars.



Joan McNerney: Her poetry has been included in numerous literary magazines such as Seven Circle Press, Dinner with the Muse, Moonlight Dreamers of Yellow Haze, Blueline, and Halcyon Days. Three Bright Hills Press Anthologies, several Poppy Road Review Journals, and numerous Kind of A Hurricane Press Publications has accepted her work. Her latest title is Having Lunch with the Sky and she has four e-books. She has been nominated three times for Best of the Net.



“THE JUNGLE,” CALAIS, 2016

Here we die slowly, he said, in our land it’s quicker,
We lie to sleep, not knowing tomorrow we have to cross
The sea to another land to a lawless place called “the jungle.”

When bombs fall in the eerie desert calm,
We cower to our hideouts, which are blown apart,
Before our eyes, smashed to powder and smoke.

Here, it’s cold; our lands are hot, sweltering,
Reeking of gun smoke and smell of cordite burning,
The mornings we forage for food and water amidst the ruins.

In the refugee camp our bones slowly chill with the cold,
Our flesh freeze, we submit to the endless hostile gaze,
Kind people come with food, but we mostly starve.

It's no different this land and the one we have left,
It's both ruled by powerful men with guns and tanks,
War lords using merchandise sold by ruthless corporations.

Yes, we die slowly here, so that our children might live,
Sleepless, they stumble out of our flimsy tents into the cold,
There's no place to play tag or read alphabets in this jungle.

We never asked for wars or guns in our lands,
We only asked for a place to live our worldly dreams,
After having eaten, to watch a movie, and sing of freedom.



John P. Matthew: Writer, poet, singer-songwriter, and blogger John P Matthew was born in the state of Kerala, India. His first success as a writer was Penguin’s world-wide short story contest “India Smiles” in which his short story “Flirting in Short Messages” was selected for publication in an anthology. His poem “Call of the Cuckoo” has been published by Poetry Rivals. He is working on his first novel and writing a book-length travelogue about his native state of Kerala.



THE LAST MARATHON

As I run my last marathon
my life runs before my eyes
I ran my first marathon
when I was sixteen years
in my schoolgirl canvas shoes
My barefoot father leading me

Just the two of us
on a road we chose
When we ran thirty miles
He hugged me and said
You're a champion

He always ran barefoot
He always ran alone
till I grew up to jog with him
and made him run faster
to keep pace with my sprightly leaps

He never ran a formal marathon
He never would compete
He had his Sunday marathons
when he ran thirty miles
and was back before the sun was up

He used to say
Every human must run
and experience the wind on the face
the sun on the back
and the pain in the muscles

I grew up from canvas shoes
to light cushioned shoes

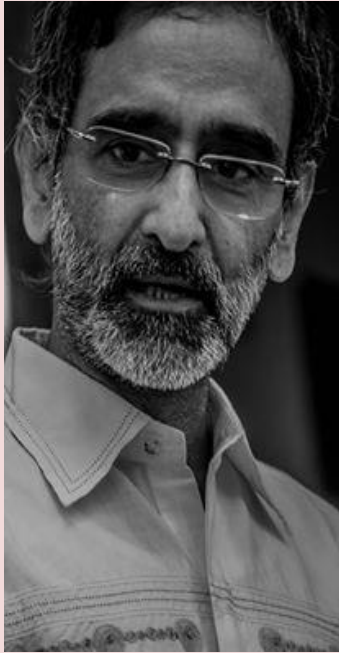
Filament Capri pants
and ultra-soft tech tops

I ran to win
to be a marathon champion
My dad stuck to his bare feet
and would never compete
except with me
He ran in loose cotton shorts
and a cotton tee shirt

I was running with him
when he collapsed and died
smiling through his sweat
My hand in his

I'm leading in this race
Far ahead of the next runner
Less than a mile to go
There's fire in my calves

A spring in my steps
I sprint in a frenzy
and collapse across the tape
Blacked out and dead in my glory



Kerala Varma: He hails from Chirakkal (Kannur), Kerala, is a former Deputy General Manager of State Bank of India and lives in Chennai with his wife Chitra. He is an amateur writer, who believes in “simple living, simple thinking”, welcoming enrichers of life like love, humour, long walk, the river, sea, mountain, books, music and Internet and avoiding complicaters of life like greed, anger, ambition, sentimentalism, sexism, god, rituals, religion and superstitions.



UNKNOWN

a Kiran Zehra poem

Why I smile in all the pain?
And ask not help, yet look in vain!
T'is to unknow all sorrows insane
To unknow grief and all mundane

When I chant a cheery spell
When I ring on the happiness bell
I unknow the words that chafe my heart
I calmly unknow the awful part

I deem thee fit, 'O' lovely smile
You rise above all turmoil
There's hope when you appear
You unknow the gushing tears

Why wait for another to comfort
Why wait for a hand to support
Unknow despair and contort gloom

Listen to your heart and let the smile bloom

Yet there's a thought before the smiles
Pause to unknow greed, anger and lies
For if you fail to unknow 'em all
They will darken your world and prepare your fall



Kiran Zehra Komial: Put her in the mountains and she will bargain rhymes and rhythm from the tallest tree and the sward. Place her in the concrete jungle and she will sing you a song of love midst the streets and the walls. Show her a burning torch and she would tell you hope is approaching! Call Ms Kiran Zehra Komial, a whirlwind of ideas or a foodie her zest for life is endless and so are her dreams! She could redefine the shades of red, yellow, black or white in words so vivid you'd almost wonder if the true shade of it was this. She

works for Rotary News as the Sub Editor of the English and Hindi magazine. Travel, gourmet and people to her are intriguing. Her poems and sketches are her theorem – simple yet deep and humble.



THE LOST GIRL

I hopped down the streets of my city

-like an impromptu dance

To an untuned song

I splashed like a drop of paint

-and turned into a mosaic

That sold like a rare masterpiece

I posed like a roman sculpture

-unapologetically, flaunting away

Those extra pounds hugging me

I celebrated like a true warrior

-owning my lost battles

Then embracing my grief

I laughed like a devil sometimes

-unable to believe the happiness

That engulfs like Uranus rings

I wander like a wronged soul

-in the places I lived till death

To seek the lost girl in me



Mahitha Kasireddi: She is from Hyderabad, India. She's an aspiring writer/poet. She had been a writer with online magazines Youth Ki Awaaz and Campus Diaries. Her poems have been published in literary journals such as GloMag and Telegram Magazine. She is the writing finalist of the Campus Diaries 25 Under 25 2016 National Contest.



SIPS OF SORROW

We make our sorrows sink
within,
everyday,
like sunken tea leaves
lying limp at the bottom of the teapot.
There the blue wound silently bleeds
the pain spreads like a golden sunset.
We pour it in cups
and take sips of the
fluid heartache,

invigorating ourselves
to wear a new mask,
create a new armoured self,
yet with each new day
comes a fresh stab of pain
and yet ,we try again.



Mallika Bhaumik: She had been a student of literature and did her masters in English Literature from the University of Calcutta . She is passionate about writing and many of her poems and stories have been published in National and International anthologies, well known magazines. She is an event planner by profession and is fond of music , travelling and cooking . She lives with her husband and sons in Kolkata and is a proud Kolkatan .



THE RAIN -THIS TIME AROUND...

transcreation of Ashiqua Tanha's poem

This time around, the rain is futile and lifeless
though unbroken and uncraved for,
hearts still meet by way of civility
-deepseated desires seem shorn
of patience yet loveless.



Late Mushtaque Ali Khan Babi AKA Max Babi: Max was a multilingual writer, poet who liked a wide variety of formats – whose life was full of oxymoronic shades, a polymath who

went from being a specialist to a generalist to a versatelist. Mentoring by being a catalyst enthralled him, he wrote on serendipity and intuition, conducted workshops on a range of subjects and topics. He was a very friendly Santa Claus.



A LETTER TO MY UNBORN CHILD

Unfulfilled dreams

Swept away swiftly

Like passing clouds

The precious egg

Planted underneath

Never had the opportunity

To develop and bear you

Never gave me a chance

To hear you scream

When you took a breath

For the very first time

To see your innocent

And beautiful face

To hug you close
And hold you tight
To prepare a bed
To cuddle and kiss
And keep you warm
To sing lullabies
And make you sleep
To see you smile
To understand and reply
To your secret lingual and
To your sign languages
To hear your laughter
To enjoy your giggles
To see your toes wiggle
To know the feeling of touch
As your tiny fingers grab mine
Wanted to teach you all
That I learnt and knew
And tell you of the
Glorious journey

I passed through
While carrying you
That moment in time
I delivered a bundle of joy
You are always treasured
Adored cherished and loved
In this little heart of mine

The world mocked me
Issue less barren and so on
Some teasingly said
Why not give another try
As though its just that easy
On bended knees I pray to God
If on earth I get another life
I never want to miss you
My sweetest unborn child



Merlyn Alexander: I hail from Nagercoil, had my schooling and college there and did my post-graduation in Botany. Surrounded by nature all around our district with tall coconut trees fringed sea shores, beginning of the Western Ghats, paddy fields and coconut grove, rubber plantations, with some red cliff valleys and scattered mountainous terrain, I feel blessed that nature has lots to offer for my poems. I'm an ardent lover of nature. Other than writing my hobbies include painting, craft, travelling music reading and cooking. I'm a blogger and I have a cookery blog. I would love to publish a cookery book someday. My collection of poems in a book. Gimme some time.

www.alexanderskitchenrecipes.blogspot.com



DRAGONFLY IN THE RAIN

A little drop, barely seen,
bouncing off a tile
sprayed my sleeping face.

I woke with a smile
at the rain's guile.

Soon it was cascading down
in a silvery gleam,
turning a muddy brown
as it touched the ground.

A frolicsome breeze
came tossing the trees,
shaking the water
into the gutter.

Plucked up an umbrella,
It carried it away;
starting up a chase
all along the way!
The sudden shower of rain,
made people hurry,
and scurry -
helter-skelter -
for shelter,
laughing as they scatter.
A dragon fly
came fluttering by,
sharp as an arrow darted
between two raindrops,
it angled and flew,
and shot straight through!
Wings shimmering like coloured glass
I saw it pass.
Earth feels fresh again
with the blessed rain!

I watched through my window pane
the antics of wind and rain.

Copyright: Minnie Tensingh 2016



Minnie Tensingh: I think I have been writing from the age of 10, contributing to the school and college magazines. Several prizes for creative writing and poetry competitions have encouraged me to keep at it. Reading is my passion and often distracts me from writing.

I have brought out a story book targeting children in their pre and early teens to encourage reading among children titled, "Mischievous In The Mountains."



For that bud, encumbered in sleep,

In petals wrapped

Encumbered lies the dream

Of the bud, sleeping

Whilst wet westerly breeze

Upon its feathery shape

Caressed soft,

The rain knows how to make the bud turn an object of
beauty,

The drizzle knows how to sketch

Lyrics upon lips.



Moinak Dutta: WELCOME! JULEY! BON JOUR! CIAO!

Me? I am nothing...I'm not a conscious poet...I just scribble;

For scribbling is like singing spontaneously...It is like dancing
loving the movements of body...So I live...So I wish to
depart...



SUKAMAA

She passed away. Suka-maa

Suka's mother. Suka's--Sakunta's--

Shakuntala's mother.

She was the mother earth,
the virtual mother of we six sisters.

In our love, perhaps she loved less her
Suka, Shaila and Koili, her own daughters.

One day, we flew the nest
making her grope
and forever brood.

Today, Sukamaa
(had she any other name?) died.

When a poor taps my car window
at the red lights of Connaught Place
I have a shudder of relief that
I am not on the opposite side.
The leitmotif of time – has it
made me such esoteric?
Then who reminds me time and again
of Sukamaa, our childhood
domestic-help, our foster-mother,
the rural poor tribal
the Kondh old woman
illiterate, deprived, downtrodden
the subaltern
one among the crores
that constitute real India?

Sukamaa, the real homemaker
in our suburban household,
she would fight with our
school-teacher-disciplinarian-mother

for being strict with us, would
not mind if my younger sisters would
urinate or shit on her lap.

Shy about the criss-cross tattoos
on her rather pretty face(which,
her mother had etched to
make her less-beautiful, thus, less-desirable!),
she would swear about tales from
her youth, when many a men
were engrossed to have
just a glance of her!

We were a foil set against her
to depict her ugliness
her tattooed face.

We felt so purified after
we had disbursed our dirt on her.

We felt so pretty when
we hoisted straight across her ugliness.

Her ease adorned her.

Her culpability consecrated us.

Her feebleness made us glimmer with health

her inelegance made us

reason we had wisdom.

Her inarticulateness made us trust

we were persuasive.

Her poverty kept us lavish.

We sharpened our personality on her

propelled our charms

with her fragility.

And nodded in the imaginary world

of our power.

Today

we are sophisticated, articulate.

We confront life with ease

like we did for years

without knowing that it was she

in her ugly, sordid, squalid

haunt, who prayed for us

day and night.

Today we pretend
with decent planning for intelligence.
Reschedule deceptions
and call them a point.
We are coping with the tough
business called life, facing the
predicament of survival
tearing apart the bonding
between her and us.
Villages have given way to cities
we have moved
from innocence to experience.

Her story is an incredible mosaic
about a generation, our generation
of the metropolis, the NRIs--
ashamed of Sukamaa's poverty amid
our chaotic urbanization.
Forgetting that
Sukamaa had created a symphony

of time and place.

Eating a proper meal was an indulgence
not meant for her, she felt.

Interposed

between two worlds – her poor
thatched house and our luxurious
apartment – contradicting,
empathizing, appalling, opposing each other.

Her dedication had no master plan
her dream was only to watch
we rising stars, in
a galaxy where the privileged
disdain the sprawling slum.

Sukamaa's silent death inquests.

Would human goodness
silently triumph someday?

Would we ever get over the fascination
to our feigning melancholy and
be like her?

Isn't it the conscientiousness of
an unwitting bystander like me
to tell her untold tale amid
all these sagas of quick-fix
T.V channels on yoga, beauty care,
weight loss and wealth-gain?
Isn't it my moral obligation
to an unmindful posterity
to tell Sukamaa's slum-dog tale?



Nandini Sahu: She is a major voice in Indian English poetry, is an Associate Professor of English in IGNOU, New Delhi, India; she is a creative writer, theorist and folklorist ; she is the author/editor of eleven books; has been widely published in India, U.S.A., U.K., Africa and Pakistan. Dr.Sahu is a double

gold medalist in English literature, the award winner of All India Poetry Contest, Shiksha Rattan Purashkar and Poiesis Award of Honour, 2015. She is the Chief Editor and Founder Editor of two bi-annual refereed journals, Interdisciplinary Journal of Literature and Language(IJLL) and Panorama Literaria. Her areas of research interest cover New Literatures, Critical Theory, Folklore and Culture Studies, Children's Literature, American Literature and ELT.



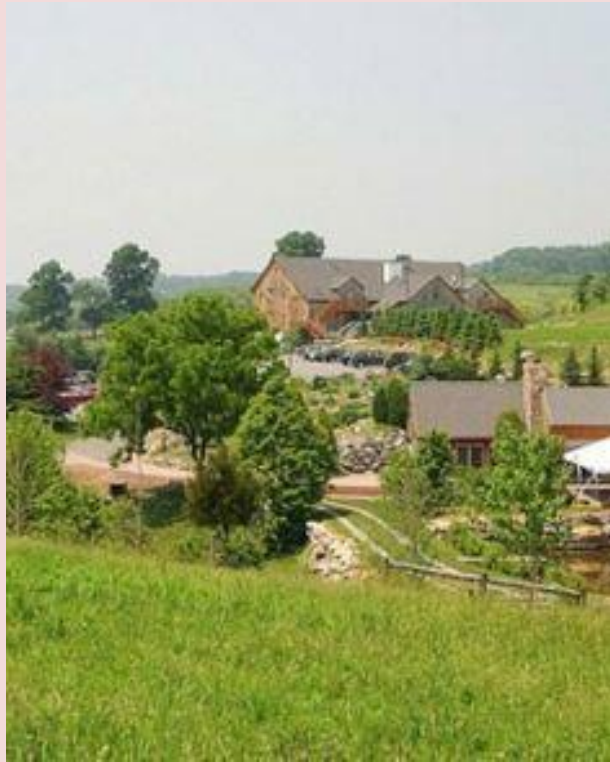
WHEN THE BERLIN WALL FELL

when the Berlin Wall fell, some
people say, they
could almost
swear
it was
the sweetest
sound in this world
and they knelt
and let their
heads touch the
sand, in prayers
imagine their surprise, when
told, there are lands that
ask to be imprisoned,

where
people
celebrate walls,
and animals in
cages think, it's
the world
outside
that has teeth



Nilesch Mondal: He is 23 years old, is an engineer by choice and a poet by chance. His works have been published in magazines like Muse India, Coldnoon Travel Poetic, Inklette, The Bombay Review, and many more. He works at Terribly Tiny Tales as writer and curator, and is prose editor for Moledro Magazine. His first book of poetry, 'Degrees of Separation' (Writers Workshop), is scheduled for a February 2017 release.



THE ROAD TO ALLEN TOWN

The road to Allen town in Pennsylvania
is made of
pumpkins and sheep;
cows graze around the edges of the bumpy road
and in a lone corner,
a horse carriage ambles to its destination.

You have to pass the county called 'reading'
but the roads leading to it is surrounded by
boys playing basketball

Cows grazing, corn fields, and
vultures awaiting for the bruised squirrel
on the road to close its eyes.



Nivedita Narsapuram: She is an unschooled student of poetry and prose. She writes to make sense of the chaotic world around through her stories and poetry. Among her other interests, she loves exploring Wisconsin and soaking in the warmth of its people and its harsh winters. She blogs at: nnivedita.com.



THE SANDS OF TIME

The ever-shifting sands of time
swirling...settling, but
ever changing and
never constant for even a second.

Sweeping away everything in its path-
fixed or broken, good or evil;
joy or sorrow, young or old.

As one grows strong, the other slowly fades
as one lurks in the shadow, the other steps into the light.

Nothing holds the power
to stay forever
as the sands of time sweep across the land.



Nivedita Karthik: She is a graduate in Integrated Immunology from the University of Oxford who likes reading books and travelling. She is an accomplished Bharatanatyam dancer and has given many performances. She loves any form of creative writing (especially poems) and writes them whenever she can.



HOLD ON

Her breast has never nursed
so they called her barren.

It has been some years of tears
so they call her foolish.

Who's this God you talk about?

They mocked.

You ask and He still hasn't answered

"bloody illiterate!"

She's Hannah

Samuel is on the way

she's YOU

help is on the way.



FRIENDS

Friends come in quality, not in quantity
they come in persons, not in people
they are in your life, not just you in theirs
friends are few, but more importantly real
they are not many and are most importantly not fake.

Know who your friends are.



Oluwatosin S. Olabode: He is a speaker, poet, blogger and writer. He is a Christian, an idealist and a 'future thinker'. He resides in Jos, Nigeria. He goes by the stage name, Double_ST (SST), which stand for Strictly Simple from Tosin- given to him

as a result of the simplicity of his message. He writes Poetry, nonfiction and a little bit of fiction; including drama depending on the context. His works centers on God, man and life.



LIGHT MY HEART

I sit by the fire,
Watching the flickering flames.

I wonder what each flame seems to
express With each dancing sway.
They warm the cockles of my heart
When I sit down near the hearth.

The flames dance away merrily
Elusive and flamboyant
Mysterious in their element,
Sparks fly like fireflies.

Searing thought burns my soul I
need fire for warmth
Why do I need light?

The flames around me glow
Waiting for my heart to know

Light is a symbol of love
Love lights up life And
the soul

I know now what I have to do
Love is the light that I need
Deep in my heart

Love for God and life around me The
embers in the dying light
Acknowledge with a flickering wink

I close my eyes and allow the light
To enter my heart.



Padmini Rambhatla: She is a homemaker and Creative writing teacher who enjoys her different roles as loving wife to an awesome and caring hubby, and as mom to her two sons, Rahul and Arjun .She loves the company of her students and strives to make them enjoy reading, writing and using their imagination to create wholesome and interesting

stories. She enjoys watching movies in English, Tamil and Hindi. Padmini dabbles in art occasionally and loves cooking a variety dishes for friends and family.



LOVE IN ANOTHER'S EYES

I see you across the room

Shoulders relaxed, sipping champagne

And I am playing with my hair

Drawing it all to my right shoulder

My neck and jawline in the air

Calling out to your attention

But then remorse hits me hard

Why in the world, do I need

You to look at me.

Appreciation!

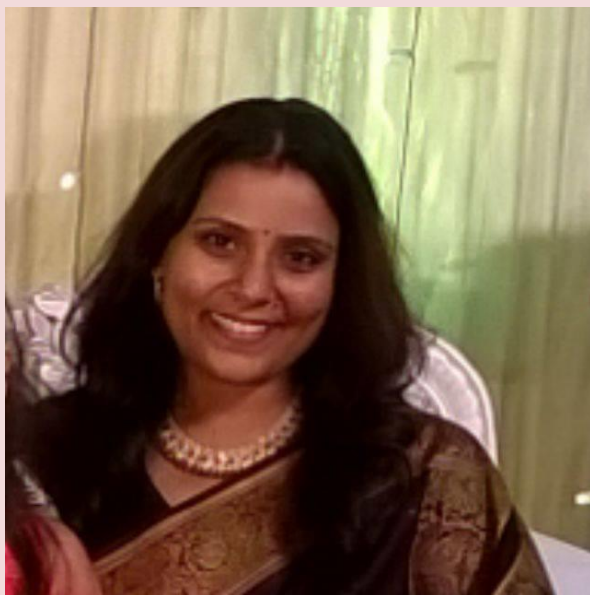
Appreciate me, love me

Oh just look at me.

And you look, and I see you see.
But my soul has flown away
To seek this tiny colossal feel
A journey to the root and beyond
To be one that doesn't search
For love in another's eyes.

Don't come to me yet
Give me some time.

The poem's core is based on body language



Panjami Anand: I am an occult practitioner by profession and I see every day it is hard to be honest in a brutal world that demands the best façade even at the cost of one's inner well-being. Sometimes it helps to know that we are all fighting

secret battles and we are not the only ones in pain. I love to observe human relationships and nothing inspires my writing more. Thus the dominating theme of all my writings are conflicts and triumphs of the same. I thank each and every one who has encouraged me to better my expression. Gratitude for reading!



Let me be a Child
Enjoy the joys of children
Grow as naturally as possible
Like the Neem tree
Tell me stories Mom
When you bathe me
When you feed me
When you put me to sleep
Tell me stories whenever you can.

Allow me to explore the Universe
Study what i want
Don't force to study
What you wanted to study.

Don't force Marriage on me

Let me choose

Who my partner is

Mom, Give me the Freedom of an Individual.



Parasuram Ramamoorthi: Poet with three published volumes of Poetry. Norwich Musings (2003); Fire courts Water 2009; Neem Gita 2011; Playwright with twelve plays published and Performed. Autism Advocate and Pioneer in the file of Drama for Autism. Chairman VELVI www.velvi.org



UMBILICAL

I am pregnant with the seed of an idea. It took hold of me like a silver sliver, just a drop of light in the swirling sea of damp darkness and made me smile for the first time in ages. When for the first time, I hear it sway within me; I stay awake through the night, weaving fables around its tiny heart.

Day by day the idea grows inside my belly; day by day I ripen and flow with the shared light. Sometimes I crave a bite of sweet-sour confabulation, at others I pour myself a strong shot of abstraction, but mostly I spend the night singing to this fetus in the tongue of birds and the sound of leaves.

On the twelfth day, when I place a hand over the growing bulge, the idea rewards me with a gentle kick. Closing my eyes, I feel the shape of its toes and fingers. In two days, I would deliver a perfectly healthy seven-pound hypothesis. I would hold it to my bosom, pat its moon-butt and hear it gasp with the first breath. May be it would talk to me in hieroglyphs and the long-lost music of starlight.

first adhaan

a lamb tinkles on

beyond the fog



Paresh Tiwari: An electrical engineer by profession, a creative writer, and illustrator by choice, Paresh Tiwari, grew up in the labyrinthine lanes of Lucknow. He took to Japanese literary short forms in the winter of 2012.

Since then his haiku, haibun, tanka, haiga, free-form poems and flash fiction pieces have been published in various journals, anthologies and books. His first collection of haiku and haibun 'An inch of sky' was published by 20 Notebooks Press and is available online.



A PRIVATE PLACE

So you think you are alone

Young lovers, oblivious to your surround

Wrapped in each others' arms

Your passion gaining with time

So you think you are alone

You chose this place because of that

And yet you do not realise

My presence

So you think you are alone

I watched you lay the blanket down

And settle yourself lost

In each other

So you think you are alone

To that extent that your ardour

Has exploded into such personal ecstasy

That even I am nearly moved

So you think you are alone

I wonder if you would have gone this far

If you had really known

I was watching

So you think you are alone

Even when that brief after moment

Of unexpected guilt and hurried dressing

Yes I saw

So you think you are alone

As you smooth your attire

And prepare to leave

My place

You thought you were alone

In this forest place, my home

Where I have stood for many a year

Just me, a tree



Late Philip G. Bell: He was born in West London and became a professional in the field of vibration and acoustics. He was awarded a Fellowship of the Society of Environmental Engineers. He has two sons and a daughter and 3 grandsons. He has written a number of technical papers, which were published internationally, before turning attention to writing poetry, short stories and a children's novel. He also founded The Young Poet Society. He has published a novel, "The Elfin Child," which is available through Amazon, Barnes and Noble and at www.elfinchild.com



ANOTHER SURGICAL STRIKE

Seeing someone off is always painful, especially when you
are seeing two beautiful eyes off from a bus stop

Another surgical strike

This time on the heart

When the entire country is bidding farewell to notes of two
different denominations

When demonitisation is the catch word, and everybody is
after money

A hundred rupee note seems more alluring, when romance is
dead

And heart becomes a machine

When each one is chasing a dream

I am chasing a dragonfly!

I am after two beautiful eyes

Looks beautiful always to me the star-studded sky

Word appears to me as if the whole world!

Poetry is life

Feeling is as good as a million dollar cash prize

Relationship matters, dew droplets matter, green grass
matter, never money

Money has only exchange value, no value in use

I am not attracted by mall and its mannequins

I am not attracted by skyscraper buildings

Who bothers Trump wins or Hillary

Hardly it matters to me even the rise of a parallel economy

I care for emotion, passion and dream,

My heart is beating

absent minded I am becoming

I feel as if it is raining and I am walking on and on, completely
drenched from head to toe

Miles away are those two slaying eyes

And smiling lips

I am drenched completely

And it is raining

I am missing some one

And it is raining

I am drenched completely

The lane of the heart is deserted

Not even a bird fluttering wing

Amidst sounds and furies

I am lying like the silent dilapidated road

And it is raining

I am drenched completely

Another surgical strike

This time on the heart, oozing blood all my veins

Another blood bath

I am drenched completely

It is raining!



Prahallad Satpathy: He hails from Balangir district of Odisha (India) is a bilingual poet. He writes both in Odia and English. So far he has published three anthologies of poetry in Odia to his credit. His poems have been published in national anthologies like Scaling Heights and international anthologies like GLOBAL ANTHOLOGY ON PEACE AND HARMONY, HAPPY ISLE, FEELINGS INTERNATIONAL, etc. By profession, Dr. Satpathy is a Reader in Economics, at present in Rajendra autonomous college, Balangir (Odisha). He has represented Odisha Sahitya Academy as honorary member for two consecutive terms.



UNION OF HEARTS

I am yours and you are mine,
Nothing shall come in between us,
Nothing shall tear asunder our union divine!
Our ties made in heaven above,
Each other's pictures encased in our hearts' alcove,
Recognition was instant,
Acceptance took a while,
For others tried to this union defile,
We faced stones, people poked fun,
We bore the hurts, when people kicked up dirt,
Our passion is clean,
There is no sin,
Small matter, colour of the skin,

Our bond will mature like vintage wine,
Wait and watch, we shall be the toast of mankind,
Everything will turn out fine!



Pratima Apte: I am an English Hons. Graduate of Delhi University. I am a homemaker, recently turned grandmother!

I used to write sporadically in the Pune edition's Women's page of the Indian Express. I love reading and writing, words are my world. My interests in reading are self-help books, spiritual and cookbooks and fiction. Books by Ayn Rand, Taylor Caldwell, Leon Uris, J Krishnamurthy, Dan Brown have been my favourites, as also layman's homeopathy, astrology and medical books.



to prove his love for her
he climbed the highest mountains
swam the deepest ocean,
but she left him
he was never at home



Praveen Ranjit: He is a creative writer who gets inspiration from nature to social issues and enjoys writing poems on love, life, compassion, happiness, human relations nature's

beauty etc. At a very young age he developed his writing skills, published poems in various anthologies and periodicals and received many awards of excellence. He was a professor in the Department of Commerce, St. Albert's college, Kochi, Kerala from 1981 to 2014.



TRAGICOMMEDIA

The bus driver skipped a couple of stops by taking the flyover, then was forced by the passengers not to leave the waiting ones stranded, so he tried to reach them by driving in reverse gear. Then the passengers suggested he go ahead and take a U-turn, in the process of doing which he left the conductor behind (who had got off for who knows why). Pure fellow had to cross a busy road to catch his own bus on the way back. Then they reached one of the missed stops, picked up the passengers and took the U-turn to proceed, when they realised that people were screaming because they'd left the folk at the other stop. So the rigmarole had to be repeated by reversing the U-turn, blocking traffic on both sides of the road, and setting up a honking that would wake the devil. We finally reached the other stop, whose passengers got in (after a lot of anxious waiting, I guess), and have been screaming at the driver and conductor ever since.

All in 15 minutes.

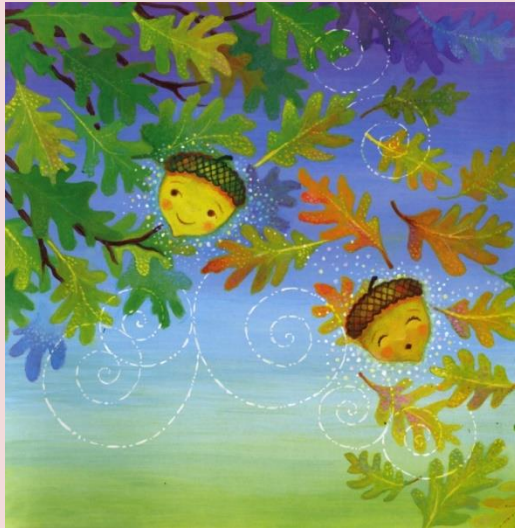
coffee stain...

the shock of her departure

cools slowly



Raamesh Gowri Raghavan: He moonlights as an award-winning copywriter by day and daylights as an award-wanting poet by night, and sandwiches an archaeology course, running two literary clubs, astronomy, the occasional trek, some peer counselling for suicide prevention, and learning languages in between. He thinks he is funny, but his friends vehemently disagree.



STAGNATION NOV 2016

This stagnation hoary and stultifying
making its inroads like blunderbuss
inside the pocket of sentinel wary.
From afar I try to thwart it
Day in and day out.

One morning me thought,
a Sycamore be planted new
in my blooming garden
with prosperous leaves
undoing all numbness.

Growth grows in breezing

leaves, whiz past:

Booming Hope sings along
Copiously branched leaves;
leaves mythic ally vibrate.

Talisman like charm and
towering up Hope Power up
in my debilitated heart,
clap up for sycamore,
more and more for protection.



S. Radhamani: She was born in Madras, did B.A. English ,obtained M.A. English from Venkateswara University, Tirupati, did her doctoral thesis on W.H. Auden's Plays, subsequently obtained PGDTE from CIEFL (Hyderabad). A

Professor of English with 31 years of teaching experience in a post-graduate and research institution, published four books of poems and one book of short story, widely published and anthologized, guided M.Phil. research scholars and PhD candidates, and a reviewer and critic. Also published poems and short stories in many websites, presented papers in National and International conferences.



abandoned

i'm a vague viar

devoid of religion

yet every cell inside of me

crucified without a cross

in your dripping drops of doubts

my existence seems obscure

it's cold

and i won't blame the weather

again



Rajesh Jethwani: He was born in Madras and has done his BA in economics. He now takes care of his family business and has his own online store. His love for tea resulted in a beautiful tea house he now runs along with his best friends. He loves train journeys, photography, eating out and playing cricket. He loves writing and reading love poems. His poem was first published last year in South Africa.



DRANYEN

to begin with
i didn't know what he was playing
it was shaped like a snake or a snake gourd
and wailed when he ran his fingers up and down its spine.
but i heard some
clouds whiplashing the peaks
and the screams of the moon as the sun
stabbed its belly and the heartbeats of a young chiru
hanging from the fangs of a speedy red fox.
i knew then that
it was dipped in a pool of sorrow
that lay still in a high valley beyond the snow.
when he finished, the sun had fallen behind
the high cliff and it was time to repay him.
i emptied out my bag and counted the notes
and gave it all to him, the heap.

he smiled and took it and went on his way
vanishing up the mountain path in a burst of mist.
when i reached home
i found within my bag
the dranyen he played
that began to wail
on its own.

Dranyen: *A stringed instrument played by Tibetans.*

Chiru: *Tibetan antelope*

(Dedicated to Tibetan freedom and the many pleasant days I spent in the Himalaya bar drinking Chhang from cut glasses in Majnu ka Tila Tibetan colony near Delhi University)



Ravi Shanker (Ra Sh): He translates from Malayalam and Tamil to English and vice versa. Published English translations of stories by Bama (Tamil), Mother Forest (from Malayalam) and Waking is Another Dream (Sri Lankan Tamil Poetry) and

for Anthologies of Dalit literature published by OUP and Penguin India. Published poems in magazines, journals and anthologies. He is one of the five contributing poets to the anthology, "A Strange Place Other Than Earlobes" (five voices seventy poems). A collection of his poetry, "Architecture of Flesh" was published by Paperwala in 2015. E-mail: shankeran@gmail.com



REVISITING

The key turns and a door slides back effortlessly

The refrigerator hymns and the mewling kittens

have begun

The rest of the sounds will fill in soon

I am a cracked bucket waiting patiently

for the customary drops from its tap

Persistent rings of bicycle bells

A 'chaka akhi' tape loud-speaking from the temple

The call of the street vendor

'Har ek maal teen rupaiyya'

Hoarse cawing from banana fronds

and hidden sparrow chirps from the green hedge

where once my siblings caught a crow
with a school ribbon
all file in noisily like unruly kids

The back drop being sketched, meanwhile
The shade of the mango tree
A mat with scattered books
Two pairs of bare legs
swinging from the courtyard wall
Sun kissing tousled heads
and a late afternoon rain-drenched courtyard
with fallen baby mangoes

I took it all with me when I left
like a farewell cake
carefully wrapped in warm, brown paper memories

so that if you revisit the place alone
you would find just a bare plot
and the scent of freshly-mowed grass

unless of course
you visit me too
and find the house intact
and its stories unabridged



Reena Prasad: She is a poet/writer from India, currently living in Sharjah (United Arab Emirates). Her poems have been published in several anthologies and journals e.g. The Copperfield Review, First Literary Review-East, Angle Journal, Poetry Quarterly, Lakeview International Journal etc. She is also the Destiny Poets UK's, Poet of the year for 2014 and one of the editors of The Significant Anthology released in July 2015. More recently, she was adjudged second in the World Union Of Poet's competition, 2016. She writes at Butterflies Of Time.



WE AND THEY

They oppress. We protest. They police.

We create history. They write textbooks. We go to their schools.

They call us enemies. We fight with ourselves. They televise our fight.

We die. They write news. We buy their newspapers.

They tell us what to speak. We speak their language. They make our thoughts.

We make art. They market it. We see art becoming cash.

They invent psychiatry. We become depressed. They make drugs.

We labour. They profit. We get wages.

They pollute the earth. We catch diseases. They build hospitals.

We grow food. They belch with full stomachs. We starve.

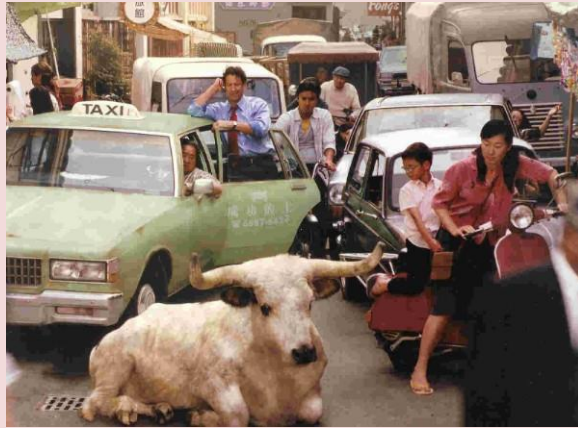
They sell bombs. We die in wars. They celebrate patriotism.

We question. They give us God. We pray for answers.

published in Cafe Dissensus



Ro Hith: He is a poet and a medico from Andhra Pradesh, writing poetry since 7 years. His poetry has been published in various online magazines, including Muse India, The Four Quarterly, Istanbul Review, Kritya, New Mirage Journal and print magazines like Kavya English, which was applauded and complimented by various senior poets. Currently, he is working on his first book of poems, which will be published shortly and an online magazine that deals with progressive poetry and translations from various Indian languages.



BRAHMA COW HORNS

silently saluting Devi cow goddess

wet chocolate bulging eyes

closing,

opening,

while frenetic waves of rickshaws

budget cars

white vans

psychedelic busses

pickup trucks with 35 people hanging on

crawl past,

chirping

belching

tat dat tat tat

music of horns

beeping
short staccato honking
treble bewailing cacophony
school's out!
"hey kid! look, no hands!"
bicyclists delivering mustard flowers
weaving in and out
throughout this constant parade of sound and color
these Indian roads
where in solitary calm
holy cows loiter about
passive and unmoving
sprawled solemn ghandis
oblivious to the bop symphony enveloping us all
scata- tip-tip tat!
dip deeeeeeeep-ta dhat!
beeeeeeeep!!!

motorbikes
whiz

weave
in
then out
no fear
biker's hair
brains
blowing all directions
while more midget cars
wait their chance to lurch out
from some long-forgotten side street
beggars hands or stumps reaching through any open
windows,
music of horns
flying purple kites
dhat dhat dhat!
punching bag earth
holes
ditches
Ayurvedic streets choking in permanent repair
anarchy construction company out to lunch

truck drivers bloody and turbaned
teawalas and street workers gesticulating
hands and feet busy with life
some heading for Kerala rice or Punjabi yellow mustard fields
dodging this constant passion
way of life
sounds of horns
flashing
cutting like knives
blinding white light
multidirectional 23 entrances
all converging at once:
dhaaaat! tat! ata tat!
whizzzzz-beep! beep!
tooooooot-tooooooot!

the Holy Cows
from Rigveda verses
save us all from
these battery charged horns

you who couldn't care less
wise chewing bovines
heroic Hindu horn blowers
help the rest of us remember
those non-violent examples
of resistance
dignified and honorable
valiant and emphatic
amid this ocean of
uncertain trumpets from hell!



Robert Feldman: Born in Paterson, New Jersey, Robert Feldman was inspired at an early age by members of Paterson's literary tradition, most notably Louis and Allen Ginsberg and William Carlos Williams. As a young adult while living in St. Louis, he organized various poetry readings, produced and hosted a community issues news hour and a

biweekly bebop jazz radio program on KDNA-FM. It was during this time his interest and admiration for the Beat Generation flourished. Robert was instrumental in publishing some of Arizona's most influential writers such as Drummond Hadley and Michael Gregory, and in 1980, collaborated with Lawrence Ferlinghetti on his Bisbee publication, "Mule Mountain Dreams." During the '80s and '90s, he participated in dozens of poetry readings around the country. Now years later, he continues to write, paint, and play tabla, besides working with high-school students as faculty advisor of the Park Vista Writers Workshop. The body of Robert Feldman's writing and painting can be accessed at www.albionmoonlight.net; he can be reached at rffeldman@gmail.com.



MAJESTIC TREES

The tallest trees have branches
Too narrow to be climbed,
The smallest ones are too weak
And the farthest ones
can't be entwined!

There are those already splintered,
Some have dried and broken off
Still others reach forever,
Some become fire and others dust!

Let's not talk of where mine are
If they ever bloomed or died:
A poet's end-in desperation
For a way to stay warm inside!

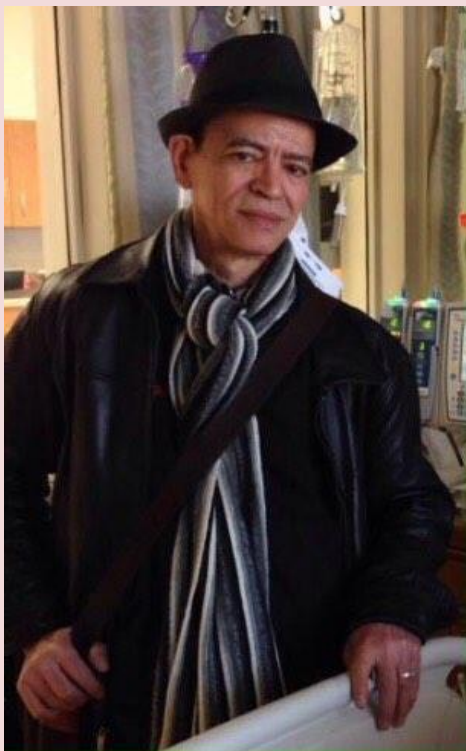
Eyes close and seasons end
The colors brought to autumn,
A short-lived span
Of drawing fingers to attention!

As they extend into space-
I don't know why
they look so crowded,
doubtful of society,
I don't know either what to think
When they finally drop!

The leaves don't ask to be single out
Though each one is different-and
I wonder-why they are so fragile,

The slightest wind
can blow them out!

Trees seem to lose their dignity
Under the tumbling heels
of strangers who restlessly
crush them into dust,
The dust of immortality!



Romeo della Valle: Born in a beautiful island named Quisqueya or Hispaniola and from Italian and Spanish parents and coming to America very young with a goal, mainly, to succeed in life and be happy. As a citizen of the world, there

is not race, color, or religious beliefs that would stop me from searching for happiness...I have become through times passed that I am a man with a Vision and a clear mission: 'To spread my message of Love an Peace throughout the World and if my poetry can touch a single soul in the World, then I would gladly die leaving my clear footprints behind!



No sigh, no cry

In the dungeon as she lie

But is it a beast or a beauty

or turned witch in its booty

"Help me dear Fairy, she cried,

From the world, that may

Turn me into an ugly witch

So my prince would choose

others instead of me

But I know he would find me

Sure he would recognise

What real beauty is"

ever since the search began

Never looked back as he ran

But soon prince charming

Found the answer

"What kind of beauty is that

Of those others that i met

They shed their mud on other(s)

So they looked prettier

But that isn't what real beauty is

It is that look which

make others feel from within"

Hence the prince chose her

as she appeared indomitably beautiful

to him



Satya Vadlamani: She hails from Hyderabad and works for a construction company. she likes to experiment on various poetry forms with diverse genres and feel that one should be exposed to enjoyable forms of writing. She is also a co-founder and organiser at Twin cities poetry club, Hyderabad.



INHERITANCE

This hat was worn by Johnny,
and my Father loved Johnny –
who taught him how to fire a gun
and took him to the woods as a child.

I never met Johnny;
he was dead before my time.

But I've worn his hat
for twenty-five years or so.

I wore it in the woods
as a kid
while pretending to be
Indiana Jones.

I wore it to the store
when I needed to buy ink
so I could print the first copy
of an early book I wrote.

I wore it to
my Father's funeral; now
both he and Johnny
are gone.

But I'll keep
wearing the hat
because I loved
my Father,
and that seems to be
the way
this whole thing goes.



Scott Thomas Outlar: He hosts the site 17Numa.wordpress.com where links to his published poetry, fiction, essays, interviews, reviews, and books can be found. His latest collections in 2016 are *Chaos Songs* (Weasel Press) and *Happy Hour Hallelujah* (CTU Publishing).



ON MY SECOND DATE WITH TRUTH

You gave me your truth,
let me know how you attempted
to save yourself from it.

How else could we have gotten
to know each other?

Every word a gap,
a small one. Because we burn
underneath, and so much light hurts.

I dreamed that truth was one.

I saw her approaching

in silence in the form
of a woman constantly turning
her soul on and off.

Her soul growing in my heart,
turning it on and off as well.
Her word ascending over my word,
whipping clean

whatever it was I had recorded
up to the very last punctuated period,
the slightest one,
the one on my crossroad.

We were so small
that up and down could not
be distinguished. So small
we erased ourselves from our
heavenly sky of half-truths,
far from grace. So small

we became tiny bullets
willing to pierce other glass hearts.



Sergio A. Ortiz: He is the founding editor of Undertow Tanka Review. His collections of Tanka, *For the Men to Come* (2014), and *From Life to Life* (2014) were released by Amazon. He's a two time Pushcart nominee and a four time Best of the Web nominee. His poems have been published in over four hundred journals and anthologies.



INDEPENDENCE FOR ME IS...

Independence for me is
freedom of heart, mind and soul,
where you live a life what your heart's say,
where nobody force to live a life against your wishes,
where nobody impose their will on you,
where nobody hinders in achieving your goals,
where no partial rules guards you all the times,
where there is no discrimination on basis of
gender, caste, colour, religion, region and ethnicity.
Where the society is free from all kinds of evils like
hunger, poverty, corruption, unemployment,
terrorism, communalism and other such.
Where nobody lives a life in fear and terror

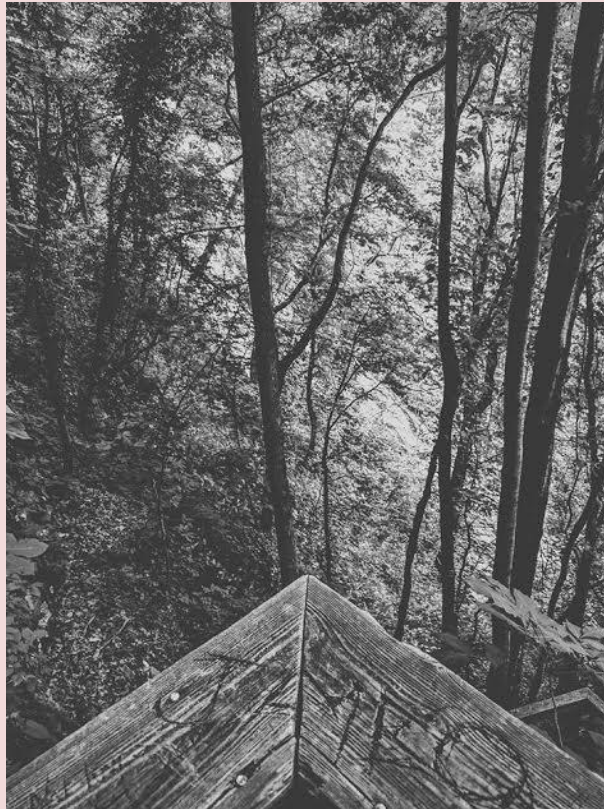
but every individual lives a life of self- respect and dignity.

Dear God! Make my country and this world such a paradise.



Shamenaz: Doctorate with specialization on Sub-continent Women Writers and teacher for 12 years, residing in Allahabad. I am a freelance writer, passionate reader, blogger, and poet, with many published poems in E-journals & magazines in India. I love to write nature-based poems as well as on various issues relating to everyday lives. I have presented papers all over India and many in journals in India and abroad. I am in the Editorial board of journals: Literary Miscellany, Cyber Literature, Research Access, Expression,

The Context & IJRHS (Jordan). I am the Guest Editor of 'The Context' Volume 2, issue 3. I have served as a Chairperson of Women Cell of my College, AIET & Cultural Incharge, AIET



'Point of View' by Suvojit Banerjee

INDISPENSABLE

Time moves like clinking metal –
granulated mercury, haphazard
when broken from its constraints
scampering, slipping, clutching,
gripping to what once contained it.

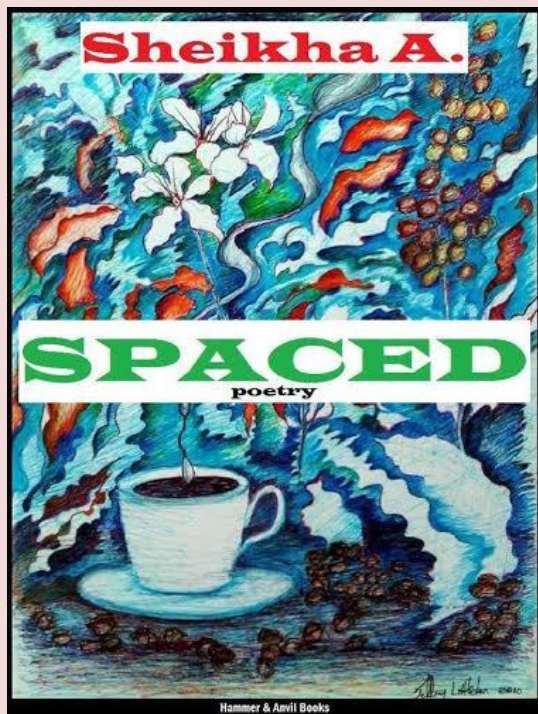
It moves to a rhythm, calendric
in stature and authority, dictating
the amassing of minutes and hours,

under a computed number – day –
you mark, smug in elusive control;

you design time on paper, list days
with spaces, then fill with reminders
of moments turned into formalities
to attend; the space grows compact
as life expands. A key at every step

unlocking a continuum – evolution,
smug still in your reign over lurking
time, until the number shifts; days
turn into yester. No more key, steps
or space to write out prophecies

...just a cul de sac and vacant past.



Sheikha A.: She is from Pakistan and United Arab Emirates. Her work has appeared in over 80 literary venues both print and online. She edits poetry at eFiction India. More about her can be found on her blog sheikha82.wordpress.com



WINTER

A sea of people with kisses of white
Brushing their cheeks, like snowflakes on roses
Lie lost in the misty seas of morning
Much like the sun, lazy to rise.

Sleeting roads that reflect
Silhouettes of sunshine, upon the forest
In whose canopy lovers lie dreaming
Of dancing shadows in the moonlight.

Screams of shooting stars, stay silent
The howling winds present the cry
Of a million tear like tiny snowflakes
That light up the dark and melancholy skies.

Freezing souls like shivering candles,
That lie awake in starry night
Know my heart's sense of longing
Kept frozen, by winter's bite.



Shivank Sarin: Like chocolate sprinkles on dessert, poetry and music have added excitement and sweetness to my life. I'm technically 18, but to me, age acts as no barrier towards being cynical or insightful. I'm notorious for my gluttonous appetite and even skipping social gatherings just to attend music lessons. I'm soon to be a first year student studying Economics at Ashoka University, where I hope to further develop my musical, literary as well as professional abilities.

Would love to hear from you at-

shivanksarin98@gmail.com



THOUGHTS ABOUT THE FUTURE

Standing desolate under the moonlit sky

Looking through fuschia pink glasses

Separating, a thin line, as in molasses

Umbilical cord, distending,

Favourtism, upholding

Thread of hope notwithstanding

Morphing into a cavernous pothole of destiny.

Stillness, a beauteous virtue

Fear, in its myriad hues

Showing off their varied colours

As in a placid compass.

Minds achanging
Will it work? Or won't it work
Constantly, bemoaning
Of a barricade of complexes.

Freeness, expanding
A lovely hue not so sparing.
But forever changing
Like a beautiful weather archipelago.

Moods of mists absconding
Though forever changing
A rainbow like colours
Slowly merging into a vast domain of
Beauty and virtue.



Shobha Warriar: Born near Trichur in Kerala, she did her schooling in Mumbai and Chennai. Shobha was highly influenced by her maternal grandfather who was a distinguished Sanskrit scholar. Shobha had a keen interest in languages, be it prose or poetry, from her school days. She completed B.A. and M.A. in English Literature as also B.Ed. She has also worked as a teacher in schools for some time. Shobha's father, K. Ramakrishna Warriar, is a distinguished writer in Malayalam, and recipient of the Sahitya Akademi award for his contribution in Sanskrit. Shobha is married to an engineer and has one daughter.



SKY'S TRAGEDY

he watches and watches, burning
in love and pique by day
and crying in the dark.

birds and airplanes reach up to comfort
but they too are aliens with their earth lives.

the earth has her seasons, changing
preferences every quarter; there's no life together
when you live in the air, and she's down to earth.



Shreekumar Varma: He is an Indian author, playwright, newspaper columnist and poet. He received the R. K. Narayan Award for Excellence in Writing in English in 2015. He is known for the novels Lament of Mohini, Maria's Room, Devil's Garden: Tales Of Pappudom, The Magic Store of Nu-Cham-Vu and the historical book for children, Pazhassi Raja: The Royal Rebel Born as HH Prince Punartham Thirunal of the Travancore Royal Family, he is the great great grandson of the artist Raja Ravi Varma and grandson of Regent Maharani Sethu Lakshmi Bayi, the last ruling Maharani of Travancore. He is married to Geeta Varma (poet, teacher and columnist) and has two children, Vinayak and Karthik.



WELCOME

The flame of lamp, that keeps on illuminating,
even against the blowing winds,
Brightness welcomes that!

The clouds, which can bring rain,
even without thundering,
Monsoon welcomes them!

Those, who have learnt to stand up,
even surrounded by failure,
Success welcomes them!

Those, who can hide their own tears,
even in the moments of pain,
Smile welcomes them!

Those, who have got a potential,
to cross all the hurdles,
Destination welcomes them!

Those, who just know to move,
further and further,
Target welcomes them!

Those, who can feel,
the pain of others,
Happiness welcomes them!

Those, who serve to live,
only for others,
Wishes and blessings welcome them!

Those, who can bear,
even the hot sunlight,
Shadow welcomes them!

Those, who can sail the boat,
even among stormy waves,
Shores welcome them!

Those, who learn to accept,
every situation of this life,
Life welcomes them!

Those who, have accepted,
the bitter truth of death,
Salvation welcomes them!!!



Sonia Gupta: PROFESSION: Oral pathologist; Sr. lecturer in dental institute. QUALIFICATION: BDS, MDS PUBLISHED BOOKS: Two English poetry anthologies; FOUNTAIN OF INSPIRATIONS, CANVAS OF LIFE..WITH MY PEN; Two Hindi poetry anthologies. OTHER PUBLICATIONS: Various common anthologies such as “ Roses & Rhymes”; “ Divine madness”; “ Christmas”; “Bouquets of love and verses”; “Voices of Humanity”; “Hope reborn”, “The reeest verses”, “Nibsteers cave anthology for peace”! Regular contributor for “Glomag magazine; Hall of poets, and “Reflection” magazine! AWARDS: Nari gaurav samman, Yug surbhi samman, Prem sagar samman, Women of the year samman, sahitay gaurav samman in hindi literature. OTHER HOBBIES: paintings, singing, Cooking, Knitting, Embroidery, Designing. EMAIL: Sonia.4840@gmail.com

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You choose to go away
Leaving me miserable and forlorn
Tried everything to overcome you
Flirted, laughed without happiness and cried
Nothing seems to work
Thought of quitting
But decided to nurse non-curative heart-ache
Now i have accepted your nonexistence
Possession of unrequited love
Make me die a little every moment
Still it remains protected in my heart



Subhash Chandra Rai: Nonconformist by birth, wearing emotions on sleeve. Enjoying path less traveled and being myself.



Pic by Sudeep Adhikari

EXCHANGING A DAY WITH FEW FEET OF ANXIETIES

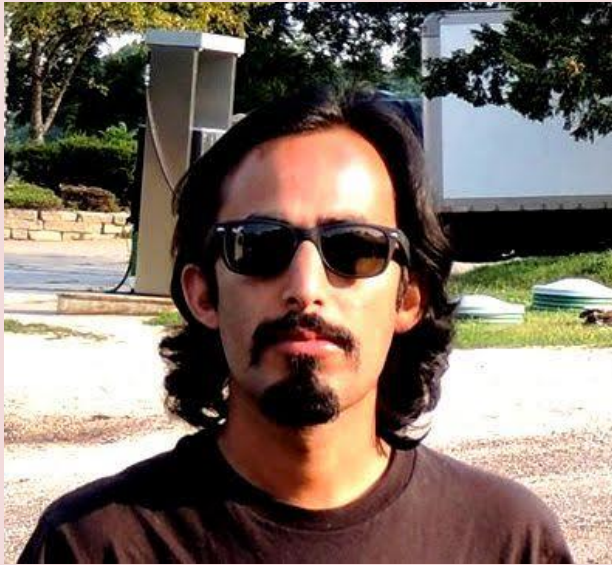
A silent day, keeps on folding onto itself
a cosmic embrace it creates, and sleeps
with its own solitude.

White efflorescence, colorless noise
aches with a rage of an apocalyptic dread
kisses every contour of my cosmos within.

The discordance of a cacophonous calm
the noise of gaps and blanks
waves of unthings, it engulfs and emits
spans the ether of an inconscient chasm.

A poem it is today, a self-composed ode
dancing on its own tunes, alongwith myriad shades.
Sheer becoming without a soul, a non-objectal field,
a relentless spin without an axis
a cosmos sans protean gods.

Vapors of irrational as they go punk
outshine the revelry of most promiscuous science
a sleep-walk through its desolate woods
and silver cities with misty-eyed times
where hanging on its blue,
satellites of vertigos and dreams.



Sudeep Adhikari: He is from Kathmandu Nepal, is professionally a PhD in Structural-Engineering. His poetry has found place in many online/print literary journals/magazines, the recent being Red Fez (USA), Kyoto (Japan), Uneven Floor (Australia), Devolution Z (Canada), Pinyon Review (USA) and Your One Phone Call (Wales).



THE OLD WOMAN'S TALE

"The Old Woman's escaping!" reported my sons.

The flood water rising high, had vanquished

Six feet tall gates and barbed wire crowned compound walls,

A serene brown sea rippled to the horizon from my terrace.

No walls, boundaries demarcated ownership,

Houses kneeled dismal in lintel high water,

Trees and decorative crotons drooped, helplessly

Met, caught dazed wanderers on eddying streams,

A nudge, a scrape, not a word exchanged,
Too shocked to complain of their plight, they parted again.

“The Old Woman disappeared towards the lake,” said Dad
Ready to discard his clothes and swim after her.

I wouldn’t let him; three floods in as many weeks
I was used to losses: two cars, an inverter, a water pump,
The woodwork in the house bloated...

The Old Man lay entangled in a watering hose
Floating next to a couple of drunken buckets -
Dustbin and a gardening pail, solemn shiny plastic
Bobbing gently in mutual sympathy,
Silent disbelief in their defenseless indignity.

Water receded leaving behind tales of drownings,
Beaches lined with dead strays,
And apartments sunk two floors deep.
At home, I only dealt with thick slimy sludge,
Wriggling creatures on floors and in jammed drawers,
Peeling walls and warped doors with curling layers

Flourishing powdery fungus and cute button mushrooms;
Arguments for car services, dealings with insurance agents,
The professional cleaners, the plumber and the electricians.
The Old Woman's fate was latent regret.

I hopelessly checked the lake on a breather,
Found she hadn't traveled far, just two plots down
My neighbor kindly hauled her back on his scooter.
A dead weight with absorbed water,
Smiling gamely as the sun dried her.
Someone had scooped out a hollow on her top...
To fulfill requirement for a tall ashtray perhaps
Or simply a thoughtless jobless defacing act...
In my garden again they pose graciously together;
Changed. Apart from her excavated top,
Taller, and the Old Man leans towards her.



Sumita Dutta: She is a photographer and the proprietor of Adlsh Photo Art. She has a degree in Fine Arts (Painting) from Chitrakala Parishad, Bangalore. She loves writing both poetry and prose. She resides in the southern end of Chennai with her two sons, her father, a cat and a dog. Find her blog at: <https://zippythoughts.wordpress.com/>



UNICORN IN MUMBAI

I see from behind
the barred windows
of my room
in a high-rise

a unicorn
looking at me
from the yonder hill
on this moon-lit night

the horn gleaming
its arched body rising up
in the scented air wafting down

from the Mount Olympus

it is here--- yet, not here

a sparkling dust

star dust starts falling down

from its body and scatters in the skies

i try to reach out and touch the strange figure

but it flees in that very instant

then stops mid-air and stares back

eyes hypnotic

taking me back in time and cultures

it is divine!

this sighting

unicorn seen suddenly

in the middle of a drab Mumbai.



Sunil Sharma: Mumbai-based, Sunil Sharma is a widely-published writer. He has published three collections of poetry, one collection of short fiction, one novel and co-edited five books so far. He is a recipient of the UK-based Destiny Poets' inaugural Poet of the Year award---2012. Recently his poems were published in the UN project: Happiness: The Delight-Tree-2015.



THE DRAGON FLY

The dragon fly in its joy, danced a merry caper,
In a few hours its life would to its end taper.
The dragon fly in its joy, beat airy wings in the light
The lizard in the far corner was gearing up for a fight.
The dragon fly in its joy she did not care a whit.
Up and down, here and there, she did her ballerina bit.
The dragon fly in its joy had feasted on some lesser prey
And now flitted here and floated there in the lantern's sway.
The dragon fly in its joy could see only the shine
Of lights on her airy wings and thus she felt fit and fine.
The dragon fly in its joy knew not the end was near,
The lizard from his crouching pose caught her neatly in the rear.

The dragon fly in its joy had lived fully to the hilt,
In lantern light was she born and by the lantern light she did
wilt.



Usha Chandrasekharan: She is a believer in the power of the universe, in the power of positive energy, in the power of words, in the power of good intentions. She has two children both of good literary prowess, both creative in their own way.



We die a little
Every sinister landline 3 am ring
We squirm uncomfortable
Someone from the not so distant kin
Breathed his last
Relief dipped in guilt
For it was not one of mine
A septuagenarian somewhere
devours the obituary
Happy to be seated
on the other side of the funeral

Friends queue up

A false bravado

Questioning the order of things

Knowing no way to circumvent

For when did anyone escape?

The fall of the last leaf...



Vandana Kumar: She is a bon vivant who loves travelling, working with young minds and exploring creative possibilities beyond the ordinary. She has done her masters in History from Lady Shri Ram College and her Diplôme from the Alliance Française de Delhi.

She is a French teacher in a couple of schools and private institutes and also translates for various publishing houses and corporates. An active member of various quiz clubs across Delhi-she has a soft corner for Kolkata where she spent her childhood. Her various passions include singing, playing the piano, composing music and participating in local

antakshari competitions. She describes herself as a dreamer...a wanderer and a certified incurable romantic...the romantic moorings worsened with all her fancy French studies. Poetry for her is her stress buster -her flight of fancy- and strangely – what keeps her rooted too.



YOU'LL HEAL, LOVE

You'll heal, love. Bruises that don't scar the skin but the soul might hurt the most, but they'll heal. There are wounds that they can't see, nor can you, but that pain from an unknown source will heal. You will never realise that the sun heals the blue sky by burning down the clouds of gloom into ashes that waters the dried land with hope. You are your sun.

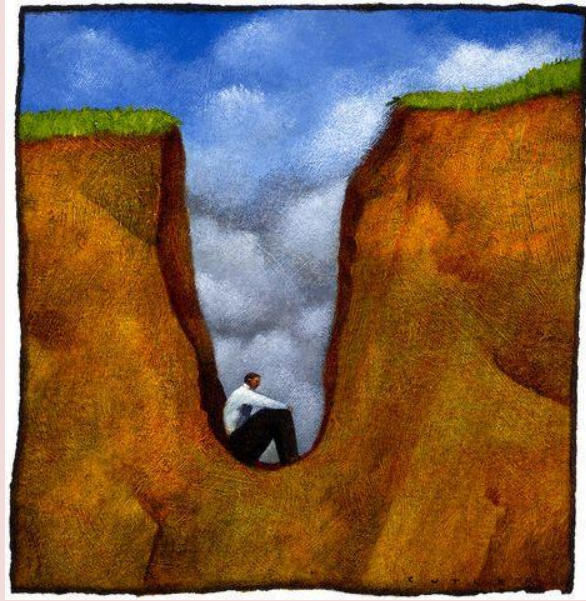
Your memories will heal, your path will never let you see what's ahead and you easily assume it's all shattered glass and bleeding hearts, but believe me, it's not. Just because you can't see through a closed door doesn't mean there isn't a paradise on the other side. Keep breathing, that's the key. Keep breathing because that's all you need to do, and your thoughts will give you the strength you need, so fill that with hope. You are your hope.

Your body will heal, who said sorrow doesn't hurt the body?
Your bones hurt, your muscles twist and turn in anonymous
directions, your blood seeps into locked spaces so that you
see at least the darkness if not the light, there are no sign
boards, there is no right path, time will help your eyes reflect
the light that you need. You are your light.

Right now, and always, you'll have to fight battles, climb
mountains, fall down, rise up, feed on positivity, kill hatred,
and for all this, you are all you need. You are your power and
I hope you will come to understand, very soon, that the love
that you're looking for elsewhere, is within you. Look within.
Try wearing a smile when you can, for you never know how
well your smile can nurse another's wound, you never know
how well it can nurse yours. You'll heal, love. You are your
medicine.



Vasanthi Swetha: She is an Economics student who is
extremely passionate about the art of poetry, dance, reading
and dreaming, and she believes that every poem that she
writes is a result of a conversation with her soul.



STUCK IN A LIMBO...

In a deserted tunnel by a turbulent sea, I trot forward
directionless,

Not many things to cheer about no anger no hatred no
sadness.

Walking like a zombie, feeding on things that don't mean a
dime,

I look for the symphony of purpose, a painfully tattered
rhyme.

But my friend you know? I think I'm stuck in a terrifying
limbo.

Climbing walls with bare fingers, bruised, bleeding and very
futile,

Wondering what lies yonder, nice things? Carefree? Another life agile?

Wading through slime, and prickly weed, quicksand and times hell bound,

Hoping against hopes the grind would end, my feet they'll I dance on dry ground.

But my friend you know? I think I'm stuck in a terrifying limbo.

All promises made, all hopes born, all dreams of distant futures

Hang by the gibbet gasping for air, choking, blinding and tearing sutures.

Uncertainty, doubt, reluctance and self-pity, befriend me abreast,

And this company churns within, creating a terribly silent unrest .

But my friend you know? I think I'm stuck in a terrifying limbo.

You passionately move ahead, and try to push the world forward,

Nightmarishly, all is where it was. You see them fall noisily downward.

False accolades, praises, superficial camaraderie, and hushed mockeries few,

Are spewed at you when you falter, at many a venture you've started new.

But my friend you know? I think I'm stuck, in a terrifying Limbo.

A limbo.

Where good seems bad, and the better seems worst,

Friends you need, turn their back on you with a fashionable outburst.

Where the mirage of accomplishment seems to be running away,

Where closures aren't happening, you are stuck mid-way.

You realise shooting stars and wishes made, are not really true

You learn to count small pleasures, and heartfelt blessings few.

All love showered on you, flushed down a dark and sinister abyss,

Where a lot seems not enough, and you hate to take the piss.

My friend. I know I'm Stuck in a terrifying limbo.



Vishak Chadrsekharan: Baker by day and Poet by night, Vishak lets his personal experiences decide the course of his pen on paper to come up with the most Vivid and brutal expression of Life situations everyone goes through. He uses his ability to connect to people emotionally to put those experiences on paper and enables others to look at the world through their eyes. He currently runs and partners a Cafe in Coimbatore called V's and pens down poems and dark Stories during the little free time he gets.



ENTANGLED WORLD

Entangled world

entangled thoughts.

Precious ever dreams

travelling in knots.

Miles apart;

a heavenly world

riches a plenty, wondered;

fantasy or ecstasy!

Perturbed world

ruffled thoughts.

Unsaid, unheard glory;

every person as though
famed- framed, to his gracious story.
Listless desires
never life so wonderful
applauded; ever admired.

Trapped whether
world in thoughts or;
thoughts in this world.
Solving notorious mystery
human mind puzzled!



Vishal Ajmera: He is a Business Strategy consultant by profession working with a reputed MNC in Mumbai. Over the years, Vishal has developed a penchant for poetry and has established himself as a successful poet cum lyrics writer; composing poetry across several genres and encapsulating various aspects of life from psychology, nature to imagery. With contributions in several international anthologies and magazine publications, his journey in the 'poetic world' continues unabated. Apart from poems, Vishal is an ardent music lover and plays guitar.



A THANKSGIVING PRAYER

A Busch can in a no parking zone.

Cycling through, I keep my eyes on it
to avoid the cold, hard stares
of the people living here.

Definitely out of place
in “that section,”
and it’s Thanksgiving, and in one part
of town folks are praying
over plates piled with meat
and mounds of vegetables;
in another, others congregate
before a bowl of burning crack.

Thank you, lord—

“Downtown tavern shooting”

for this meal—

“Prostitute arrested.”

Aroused, as the waitress stops

and says, “How is everything?”

Fine, thank you. Life goes on

forever and forever.

Amen.



William P. Cushing: One of Bill's earlier works, this poem came out of his undergraduate days in Florida when he noticed a juxtaposition of "images" during the season of tradition American holidays. The picture, however, is a recent one from Venezuela, showing that things haven't changed much in a quarter-century.



ciao! 😊